Tea Cosy

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/24117085.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warnings:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings, Rape/Non-Con
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Will Graham's Dogs, Hannibal Lecter, Original Graham-Lecter Child(ren)
Additional Tags:	questionable morals, questionable medical science, Organ Transplantation, Pregnancy, Surprise pregnancy, Non-Consensual Pregnancy, Mpreg, Non-ABO MPEG, Post Fall, Establishing Relationship, First Kiss, First Time, doting, Devotion, Arguments, Surgery, home birth, Parenting, Dogs, Hannibal has no moral compass whatsoever, Will Graham puts up with so much shit, the dub/noncon tag is for pregnancy only no actual rape occurs in the story
Language:	English
Series:	Part 20 of Prompt Stories
Stats:	Published: 2020-05-10 Completed: 2020-06-22 Words: 23,053 Chapters: 7/7

Tea Cosy

by StratsWrote, whiskeyandspite

Summary

“You’re awake.”

Hannibal stood in the doorway, balancing a tray across one palm, a glass of water in the other. He had a book tucked under one arm. Prepared to wait if Will lingered in sleep.

“I think so,” Will told him. “It still feels like a dream.”

“We killed a dragon,” Hannibal said, settling his treasures down on a bedside table. “And were born anew from the sea. It does sound something like a fairytale.”

Hannibal has taken away two children from Will Graham, he will not hurt him that way again. Instead, he will give him a child, their own child, that Hannibal will sire and Will will carry to term... because what screams "love" louder than transplanting a uterus into your male partner without his consent?

Notes

Okay so the Rape/Non-Con warning is for the absolute lack of consent Will gave to getting a uterus implanted into him and carrying a baby to term in it. No rape occurs in the story between these two or anyone else, but since consent was a HUGE issue (and is pertinent to the entire story) we needed the warning up.

This one is a bit of a ride, guys, but we are so proud of it and hope you give it a try, even if it feels way out of left field.

So uh... happy mothers day?

See the end of the work for more notes

- Translation into 中文-普通话 國語 available: [中译] Tea Cosy 茶杯保温套 by HayKer
- Translation into Русский available: Tea Cosy by TheGreenBear

Chapter 1

Will woke slowly. A twitch of fingertips, eyes shifting beneath exhausted puffy lids, the tip of his tongue parting parched lips, and a groan.

Soft hands, warm, far too warm, against his cheeks, thumbs drawing slow circles beneath his eyes and a voice Will knew, gentle and reassuring, murmuring his name.

He remembered the cliff.

He remembered the sea.

He remembered pain, and Hannibal's lips against his own.

"Han-"

"Hush, I'm here."

More touches, whispers, a susurrus of shifting fabric and the smell of something cool and almost familiar. Clinical. Clean.

"You need to drink," Hannibal murmured, touching Will's face again. Something bumped up against his lips and Will parted them, tongued against the straw, drew in a mouthful of water.

Choking, dropping, smashing, drowning, dying, dying, dying -

"Slow down, Will, it's alright," Hannibal eased his head up as he coughed, holding him steady until Will drew in a breath through gritted teeth and whined in pain. "Just a little more, and I'll give you something to put you down again."

"No,"

"Will."

"No, I want -" another groan, furrowed brows, trembling lips. Will opened his mouth for the straw again and slowly opened his eyes.

Like a photo developing, things came into view shadow-first. Outlines, edges, colors slowly filtering in until Will could see the room he was in.

Neat. Impersonal. Someone's spare bedroom, carefully and sparsely decorated.

And Hannibal, at the side of the bed, looking battle-worn and bruised.

And beautiful.

Will let that thought shift over him, categorized it. Yes, that was the direction they were going in. Perhaps had been, for a long time now. Years. He let the thought stay, somewhere in the

back of his mind, so he could take it out and ruminate over it again later.

“Where?” He rasped, accepting another grateful sip.

“Nova Scotia, for now. France, in a few weeks, when you’re well enough to travel.”

The words brought the pain back to the forefront of Will’s mind. As if it had been humming along in the background the whole time, waiting for his acknowledgement.

The itch of stitches in his cheek. His shoulder wrapped tightly and his arm secured against his chest.

He wasn’t sure what to make of the pain in his stomach. He couldn’t recall being stabbed there, but when he reached for the bandages, Hannibal gently caught his hand and guided it away.

“Pierced on the rocks,” he explained. “The waves battered us against them for a good while before I was able to drag you onto the shore.”

Will nodded. He hadn’t expected to survive that plunge. He’d seen it as the final most beautiful gift he could give Hannibal after the gift he had given Will. A wedding, of sorts, a ceremony overseen and accepted by the angry waves, witnessed by the eroding bluff.

“How long -”

“This is the fourth day,” Hannibal told him. Will felt the bed shift as Hannibal settled his weight on it, not lying beside Will but sitting near, one hand up to press to his heart, the other still holding the glass with its straw loosely for when Will needed it again. “You needed the rest.”

“So do you.”

“I fared better,” Hannibal replied, and Will could hear the smile in his voice. Relief, perhaps, pleasure that he could care for Will as he had for so long wanted to and Will had for so long fought against. Not smug. Not anymore.

“Can I’ve something for the pain?” Will mumbled. His words were blurring together, head pounding like the waves had pounded them against the jagged shore. Hannibal’s weight left the bed, his hand left Will’s skin. He woke again to fingers in his hair, guiding him up enough to swallow something.

Then he slept.

His next attempt proved more fruitful; Will felt better rested, more aware. Hannibal wasn’t in the room this time and he lay back to wait for him to return, inevitably off somewhere preparing a meal or working out plans.

The room rocked. It took Will a long while to notice, dizzy as he was from the lingering fog of the medicine. But there, a slight shift, a splash of waves against a hull.

They were on a boat. A smile tugged at Will's lips. It was definitely bigger than the one he'd sailed to Italy; there was no kitchenette in this room, and if Hannibal was getting any sleep, it wasn't beside Will, who'd been carefully laid out across pristine sheets with an IV tucked into the back of his hand.

"You're awake."

Hannibal stood in the doorway, balancing a tray across one palm, a glass of water in the other. He had a book tucked under one arm. Prepared to wait if Will lingered in sleep.

"I think so," Will told him. "It still feels like a dream."

"We killed a dragon," Hannibal said, settling his treasures down on a bedside table. "And were born anew from the sea. It does sound something like a fairytale."

"Or a legend," Will smiled, tucking his uninjured cheek against his shoulder. "Have you eaten?"

"Yes."

"Are you lying?"

"No," Hannibal replied, but he was smiling. He helped Will sit up and tucked more pillows behind him to help him stay upright when he moved away. Will shuffled up against them with a groan until he was comfortable.

"Who's sailing the boat?"

"No one," Hannibal told him, resting his hip against the side of the bed. "We're docked a little way off shore. Close enough for supplies as we need them."

"You planned for this."

"I hoped," Hannibal amended, then paused considering Will before him. He had hoped for a great many things. He'd hoped that his plans would remain pertinent for two. "Chiyoh outfitted the boat with supplies to last us a few weeks. We underestimated the extent of our injuries, however. We would have been farther along our journey had we planned for that too."

"Is she -"

"Gone, I'd assume. She wastes little time."

"So it's just the two of us.". Alone on the boat. Alone in the room. Will was too tired for a flush of heat through his body, but he imagined in a few weeks, he might feel differently.

"Not precisely." Here, Hannibal paused. He was not a man made for guilt, something Will had long since resigned himself to, but he was a man of secrecy, caging the truth in twists and omissions.

But not anymore. Not when Will had given up so much to follow him over the edge.

“Hannibal.” Will reached for his hand. Hannibal met him halfway, supporting him when the motion tugged painfully at his belly.

“You were severely injured,” Hannibal told him. He fussed with the tray, bringing a spoonful of something steaming and savory up to Will’s lips. “I needed assistance. Replacements.”

“For *what?”*

Hannibal deftly slid the spoon between Will’s parted lips, as though feeding a child. The soup was delicious, unfairly so, considering they were on a boat off the Canadian coast. “You’d lost quite a bit of blood,” Hannibal said. “And a kidney. Our blood types were not compatible, but I am fortunate enough to know a universal donor.”

“Who?”

“An old friend.”

“ *Hannibal.* ” Will held up his hand against the spoon and turned his head away, eyes narrowing at the man before him. Both knew he had the patience to outlast Hannibal’s worry over his well-being, the doctor relented.

“Bedelia.”

Will blinked, unsure for a moment what emotions were flooding his brain. There was relief, he supposed, that it was at least someone who had it coming. A cool indifference for the loss of a life. Strangely cool, considering that life was helping Will sit up and see and hear and feel what was around him.

“Should have run faster,” Will murmured after a moment. “She’s not still -”

“No,” Hannibal admitted, trying to feed Will again. With a sigh he opened his mouth to let him. “She passed without incident or too much pain. She had her uses,”

Will hummed, licking his lips as he swallowed another mouthful, frowning at the bowl. Hannibal shook his head, preempting the question. “Chicken and herbs, Will, something nourishing but easy on the stomach. It was an intensive surgery.”

“Wouldn’t put it past you,” Will mumbled, accepting another spoonful. He could feel the shift and pull where yet again he’d been cut open. The pain felt more like a kneading bruise than anything particularly sharp. He supposed it had only been hours since Hannibal had patched him up. Bedelia might even still be warm.

That was a troubling thought.

“If they find the body,” He said, work brain taking over, as it always did when he was stressed, “they’ll know where we are. Or at least, where we were.”

“She’ll keep until we set sail. Chiyoh procured a repurposed fishing vessel for us, we have a large icebox to store her in.”

That line of thought had only made it worse. In the moment, Will could handle things. When he ripped apart Randall Tier or the Dragon with his bare hands, he’d felt no regret.

But to think of Bedelia as both a person and a body at once made him vaguely nauseous. Or maybe it was the painkillers. Will shook his head.

“So we leave her somewhere in the Atlantic. And then on to France, as if nothing happened?”

“As if *everything* has happened.” Hannibal’s eyes found Will’s, intense, searching. Yearning.

“I’m not going anywhere,” Will promised. He felt tired, already, but also very certain. There was no other choice for him to make. “Whatever comes next, I’m here with you.”

Hannibal smiled. It was a small smile, barely an uptick of the corners of his mouth, but Will saw the relief writ there as easily as he’d ever seen Hannibal.

Hannibal fed him a few more spoonfuls of soup, and when Will slept again, it was with that smile in his mind.

He slept a lot for the next several days, waking up for Hannibal to feed him, clean him, help him to the bathroom, dress him. Will didn’t sleep on a particular schedule, so keeping track of days was difficult. He figured he’d been out another three before Hannibal removed the drip and didn’t check his blood pressure every few hours.

He gave Will medication, more than anyone with a simple injury should get.

But, he supposed, organ transplantation outside of a legitimate hospital had dire risks, and took whatever Hannibal gave him.

Once he could lever himself up to go to the bathroom on his own, Will insisted Hannibal slept beside him.

Will had grown used to sleeping beside a living creature. For a while, it had been his dogs, soft, warm, gentle things dozing beside him, kicking out in their sleep, stretching and yawning and scratching themselves. Then it had been his wife. The comfort of another person’s heartbeat, their warmth, their particular sleepy smell.

The bed was narrow but not impossibly so, enough that they pressed close to sleep, but had the chance to turn and shift without the other ending up on the floor. Will found that he slept best when he tucked himself beneath Hannibal’s chin, hand over the metronome of his pulse. He got used to waking up to fingers carding through his hair.

Life settled into a pattern, a new reality. The scar healed; Will found it a bit odd that Hannibal had gone in from the front, but he didn’t remember much from the fall. It was possible- likely, even- that he’d already been open for Hannibal’s perusal.

The morning that Hannibal declared him healthy enough to leave the bed for more than a brisk walk to the bathroom, Will was off like a shot. Hannibal's attention had been both flattering and immensely satisfying, but the room had begun to feel stale. He took to the deck as soon as he could, taking deep lungfuls of sea air.

"Halifax," Hannibal said, gesturing across the choppy sea to the city Will could only just make out. They had anchored at a distance, and Will knew Hannibal moved them regularly up and down the coast to avoid suspicion.

"I suppose we won't see much of it," Will mused. "Now that I'm up and about, we can head for France."

Hannibal looked at him, a lingering look that Will felt all the way down to his toes. "Soon," he said, reaching for Will's hand, and when he leaned in a little closer, Will forgot to ask when.

Kissing Hannibal felt exactly like Will had imagined it would, the scant few times he'd imagined it. A little dry, to begin with. Scruffier than expected, because Hannibal had let his stubble grow out a bit. But *right* , somehow.

The sensation left Will breathless in the best possible way. He brought a hand up to cup Hannibal's cheek, let his eyes close, let the laziness of the kiss match the shift of the water beneath them. It wasn't claiming or demanding. It wasn't chaste, by any stretch. It just was. A slow exploration of each other after months, years, of keeping such things deep within the walls of Hannibal's memory palace and Will's fevered dreams.

With a hum, Will pressed their foreheads together and turned his nose in a gentle nuzzle against Hannibal's own. They stood for a while doing nothing else. Will's hand against Hannibal's face, Hannibal's curled gently over Will's elbow.

It was a safety Will felt to his bones.

"How are we for supplies?" He murmured after a while. Hannibal exhaled slowly against him but didn't move away.

"Adequate," he admitted. "Several days more that we can comfortably feed ourselves. Enough water for twice that time."

"Good," Will replied. "Means we don't have to dock for a while. Can stay here."

He didn't know why that particularly mattered. He wasn't certain it was even pertinent, but he didn't want Hannibal to be away from him just yet. He wanted to see for himself the scars Hannibal had gotten from the dragon, the marks that had been left on him. He wanted to memorize Hannibal inch by inch with his eyes and his fingertips. He wanted to press close until they were truly conjoined.

Hannibal's hand caressed Will's side, then slid in over his belly, over the heat of the scarring incision. "You should get back to bed," he murmured. "You still need rest."

“Only if you come with me.”

It turned out that Will wasn’t quite recovered enough for sex. He wasn’t sure if he should feel relieved or disappointed.

He was well enough to be curled into Hannibal’s warmth, however, and to spread his palm wide over the thump of Hannibal’s heartbeat. He was well enough for kissing, which he apparently enjoyed, and for soft, murmured conversation.

He was not well enough to fight off infection. He woke to Hannibal slipping the IV back into his hand, murmuring reassurance when Will, in his confusion, tried to resist.

“It’ll be alright, Will. Trust me.”

Darkness swam in Will’s vision, and took him once more.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

> *“When I opened Bedelia to acquire a kidney for you, an opportunity occured to me. She would no longer be needing it, of course, and you’ve longed so much for a child.”*
>
> ...welp, so begins the mess and madness!

Chapter Notes

> Quick reminder that we are not at all medical, so any mentions of surgery and/or processes are... fudged. To say the least.

Teeth. Claws. Blood.

The rush of feet on a leafy forest floor and Will realizing it’s his own. He’s running. He’s tearing through the forest, Wolf Trap a ship of comfort behind him as the fog thickens and eats it up. He can’t go back, he’s not alone in the forest and he has nowhere to turn and he has to keep moving, keep pushing, keep running -

Stop.

But the running footsteps don’t stop. Something still following, still stalking, still -

On his back, old leaves and peat slimy against his bare back and he’s cold, or he should be cold, he should be freezing, but his blood’s boiling beneath his skin and a familiar shadow is outlined against the bare hint of moonlight behind it and Will opens his mouth to scream and moans instead.

Antlers. Hollow eyes. Black skin. Sharp claws.

Shoving, tearing, cutting Will’s stomach open, spreading his legs hard enough to pull him in half but instead it’s a penetration, not a rending, deep and thick and hot and Will digs helplessly at the earth beneath him and arches up to meet the thing that mounts him.

It followed him over the cliff, it followed him into the ocean, it followed him through the fire of his mind and into the comfort of it and Will’s glad *it’s back, like an old friend, like a scorned lover returned to claim what’s rightfully his.*

Will lets him. He spreads wider. Moans louder. Swallows blood as teeth meet his lips and rub them raw. His belly is torn apart, the creature pulsing itself into the empty hollow of Will's being, filling him as surely as it empties him, over, and over, and over, and -

Will woke groggy, mouth tasting awful and eyes stuck together with sleep. There was still an IV in his arm and he let his eyes track it to a bag of saline solution as he rubbed at them with a groan.

The sound drew Hannibal to the room again and Will offered him a half-hearted glare.

"I'd appreciate a little more say in my care," he mumbled. "You can't just knock me out whenever you feel I'm on the brink of being slightly unwell."

Hannibal's lips pursed; the closest Will had seen him come to looking slightly chastened. Good. When he stepped further into the room, Will reached out with his free hand to take Hannibal's.

"So what happened? Bedelia decided to fight me from the inside out?"

Hannibal settled himself into a chair that had not been at Will's bedside the last time he'd been awake. How long had he been out, that Hannibal needed to sit and guard him?

"You sustained an infection," Hannibal explained. "Hardly uncommon when recovering from surgery, but organ donation is particularly tricky. It isn't unheard of for a body to reject the organ entirely."

"My body gets along with her about as well as I did," Will summed up. He tried to follow the sentence with a chuckle, but laughing pulled painfully at his stomach. Looking down, he saw he'd been bandaged heavily once more. "Had to open me up again?"

"Just a little," Hannibal assured him. "You'll need to recover again, but you'll be back on deck before we dock in Europe."

The thought cheered Will, but not by much. He'd missed having a cool ocean breeze on his skin, but he wasn't looking forward to more time in bed, not when he'd *just* gotten out of it.

"Do I get the good drugs again?" He joked. Hannibal smiled and did something with Will's IV that made him feel icy for a moment.

"Absolutely."

Will groaned and frowned, keeping his eyes on Hannibal even as he started to grow hazy. He hated that he was struggling with his recovery while Hannibal seemed to be entirely immune to any sort of human suffering. He hated it because he wanted to be above deck, he wanted to be helping and planning, he wanted to finally live their lives together.

"Sleep, Will."

"No," he replied petulantly, and immediately closed his eyes.

When he woke next, Hannibal was in the chair again, a book in his lap as he read by the light of the bedside lamp. Evening, then, or close enough to it that the light was necessary. Will grunted in displeasure and shifted about, and Hannibal's eyes immediately alighted to the movement.

"Water please," Wil mumbled, gratefully accepting the straw when Hannibal held the glass near enough. He needed to go to the bathroom, he wanted a shower, he wanted to get the hell out of bed.

"How long do I have to stay down?" he asked. Hannibal smiled.

"Until you feel well enough to get up."

"Good, now then."

"Will."

With a sigh, Will lay back and stared at the ceiling. When Hannibal set his hand to Will's, he turned it so they were palm to palm, a warm gentle touch.

For the first time, Will felt a jolt of guilt. Whatever injuries he'd sustained in the fall, he'd dealt with them alone, while trying to save Will from his own poor decisions. Twice.

"I'm sorry," Will said softly, linking their fingers. "I won't leave you again."

Hannibal's brow furrowed. "You are not responsible for the needs of your body, Will."

Wasn't he? Hadn't it been Will who threw them over the cliff?

Hannibal leaned forward to brush a kiss over Will's brow. "Rest."

Will rested. He rested quite a bit more than he thought was necessary, suffering through embarrassing assistance with his bodily needs and flat out declining a sponge bath. He'd wash *himself* , thank you very much, and Hannibal could enjoy his nudity only when he was finally ready to give Will what he wanted.

At the point in his convalescence when Will could be trusted to make his own way to the bathroom, they set sail. Hannibal had restocked their stores while Will was asleep (as he usually was), and though they would need to stop in Greenland along the way to refuel, it would be relatively smooth sailing for the next few weeks.

Will had never been seasick in his life, but the first time Hannibal brought him back above deck, he'd immediately lost his breakfast over the side. Hannibal ushered him into a chair, wrapping Will in a thick blanket as he sat.

"I feel like an infant," Will groused as Hannibal fetched a bottle of water for him. "It's not even the pain."

"It happens," Hannibal reminded him, settling into a crouch at his side. "Your body suffered a massive shock, a huge trauma."

“I don’t remember feeling this shit when you cut me open the first time,” Will mumbled, but it was without rancor. He’d been in an induced coma at the time, he hardly remembered anything at all except the agony he’d felt at Hannibal’s betrayal of him. It had stung worse than the knifeblade. He rinsed his mouth and spat over the side before taking a proper sip.

“It’s good to be on the water again though,” he admitted softly after a while, giving Hannibal a smile. “The last time I was, I was coming to Italy.”

“For me.”

“For you,” Will grinned. God, it felt like a lifetime ago, their chases, their toying back and forth. “You didn’t happen to pack fishing rods for the journey did you?”

“As a matter of fact,”

Will laughed. Because of course he had. Of course he’d thought of it. They may not have been Will’s but they were there, for him.

The days developed a routine, but a pleasant one. Will rose tucked into Hannibal’s arms, Hannibal’s hand over his belly tugging him close. Hannibal would bring him breakfast and painkillers, and then help him to his feet. Will washed himself, then joined Hannibal on deck, where he would sit and fish. At some point, Hannibal would bring him more pain killers. At some point, Will would be sick over the side of the boat again.

“It should be getting better,” Will complained one morning, shivering stubbornly in his chair. Hannibal kept trying to coax him back below deck, but Will had been confined to the bed for too long. He’d missed the opportunity to leave the boat when they docked in Greenland, he wouldn’t miss anything else.

Well, perhaps he’d miss a little, because there went his bladder again. Ever since the second surgery, it seemed to have shrunk. Slowly, Will pulled himself to his feet, waving off Hannibal’s helpful fussing. “I can use the bathroom by myself, Hannibal.”

“It will pass,” Hannibal promised, hovering despite Will’s dismissal. “Soon we’ll be in France, and you can recuperate in our home instead of on rocking waves.”

“Joy,” Will muttered. “A whole new room to confine me to.” He winced, glancing at Hannibal from the corner of his eyes. “I didn’t mean that.” He had, but he wasn’t pleased with himself for it.

Hannibal didn’t seem offended. He untangled Will from the blanket so he could move freely, and let him ease his way down the steps. “You’re not a man who likes to be confined. I promise there will be space when we are settled.”

But it wasn’t space around him that bothered Will, it was the fact that he didn’t feel like himself. Maybe everyone who received a foreign organ felt that way. Maybe everyone who had literally fallen off a cliff into a new life felt that way. But Will felt different in a way that made him unhappy, uncomfortable. He felt unmoored.

He kept returning to the scar on his stomach, not the one Hannibal had ‘gifted’ him all those years ago, but the newest one, the one that had saved his life. Will had healed from near-fatal wounds before, and he knew, he *knew* that something was off with the way his stomach felt. Sometimes there were cramps, not excruciating ones but enough to be far from welcome. Sometimes he just felt… odd.

And he’d never heard of a kidney being removed from the *front* of a person’s body.

Not once.

Once on land, Will didn’t feel any more settled. In fact, he paced and circled and was much more irritable than usual. And Hannibal… Hannibal seemed clingier than usual. Adamant that Will take his medication, that he take supplements, vitamins, get a shot once a week for something, he didn’t even know *what* anymore.

“I feel like a science experiment!” Will exploded one evening. “Hannibal, what the fuck is going on? I’m exhausted, I’m irritable, I can’t sleep - and this is nothing, *nothing* like the time I was hallucinating, this is something *else* .”

Hannibal had cautious hands. He’d never been cautious before, but now, whenever he fluttered around guiding Will into chairs and checking his injuries, his hands were soft and gentle. It tugged even more at Will’s irritation, especially when Hannibal attempted to get him sitting again.

“No,” he snapped, batting Hannibal’s hand away. “No, I don’t want to *sit down* , I don’t want to have a *nap* or a *‘turn about the garden* .’ I want to know what’s *wrong* with me. What you’re hiding from me.”

“Stress is bad for your condition,” Hannibal insisted, though he didn’t attempt to press Will into a chair again.

“My *condition-”* Will shook his head, teeth bared. “And what is my *condition* , Hannibal? Do we lie to each other, still? After everything we’ve been through?”

Hannibal looked at him, cautious and contemplative. “If you sit down,” he said gently, “I will tell you whatever you wish to know. But your body cannot handle large amounts of stress, and I believe this conversation will be stressful for you.”

Will collapsed back into a chair, practically throwing himself into it. He scowled at Hannibal, one hand rubbing at his rolling stomach. Dinner had sat poorly with him, too savory and too thickly scented.

“When I opened Bedelia to acquire a kidney for you, an opportunity occured to me. She would no longer be needing it, of course, and you’ve longed so much for a child.”

The words made no sense to Will, who cocked his head in confusion. “We tossed Bedelia’s body into the Atlantic.”

“Not before I relieved her of her uterus.”

Will huffed in frustration. “What does that have to do with anything you’ve been doing to *me?* ”

“You’re pregnant, Will.”

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

> *“Oh god,” Will moaned, tucking his face into his hands, “I’m having Bedelia’s baby?”*
>
> *“Of course not,” Hannibal assured him. “Her uterus may provide the space to incubate, but I liberated a clinic of some eggs whose donor matched your description. I thought it best if the child resembled both of us.”*
>
> *Will snorted. This was ridiculous. It was the most ridiculous thing he’d ever heard. “That’s real sweet of you,” he said sarcastically. “Now take it out.”*

Will blinked. Slow, deliberate motions, trying to see if Hannibal would finally crack a smile, reveal that he’d wanted to see what Will would do. But he didn’t. He continued to stare at Will with genuine concern, as though nothing was off, as though nothing was *weird* , as though he hadn’t just told Will that he was -

“Pregnant?” Will repeated.

“Yes.”

“Hannibal, I’m going to go out on a limb and assume you, as a *doctor* , understand that the male and female reproductive organs are *different* .”

“I do, Will, and -”

“So I haven’t got the capacity, nor the *organs* ,” Will emphasized, “to get pregnant.”

Hannibal didn’t immediately answer and Will felt like he was going to be sick again. Like he had been *every morning* , like he had been sometimes in the middle of the night out of nowhere. When Will reached for Hannibal it wasn’t to gently touch him, it was to grab his hand very hard, enough to feel his bones shift.

“Hannibal what the hell did you do.”

“I have taken every opportunity for a child you have had before. It seemed only fair that in our metaphorical marriage, I give you a new one.”

“What did you *do?”*

But Will knew. He knew it with a stronger surety than he’d ever known anything. It should have been impossible, but this was *Hannibal.* Hannibal did not seem to be limited by things like reason and science.”

“It seemed such a waste,” Hannibal murmured. “Bedelia certainly wasn’t going to be using it.”

“Oh god,” Will moaned, tucking his face into his hands, “I’m having *Bedelia’s* baby?”

“Of course not,” Hannibal assured him. “Her uterus may provide the space to incubate, but I liberated a clinic of some eggs whose donor matched your description. I thought it best if the child resembled both of us.”

Will snorted. This was ridiculous. It was the most ridiculous thing he’d ever heard. “That’s real sweet of you,” he said sarcastically. “Now take it out.”

Hannibal frowned, brows drawn together as though Will had genuinely hurt him and that made Will snort again, shaking his head. He brought a hand up to his mouth and pressed his fingers there until they paled. Then he pressed harder. Then he shoved Hannibal aside and barely made it to the bathroom before he was violently ill in the toilet.

It didn’t help. It didn’t fucking *help* .

He heard Hannibal in the doorway and held his hand out behind him to keep him from coming nearer.

“Will.”

“Don’t touch me.”

“Will, let me -”

“Don’t -” he took a few deep breaths, pushing himself to stand. He flushed the toilet, bent to drink from the tap and rinse his mouth and face, and looked at Hannibal only when he was forced to meet his eyes in the mirror. “Don’t touch me unless it’s to put me the fuck under and take that thing out of me.”

“That… might not be possible.”

“You put it in,” Will reminded him, whirling on the man and shoving a finger hard to his chest. “You can take it out.”

“You might not survive that,” Hannibal told him carefully.

“I’ve survived worse.” Will’s bravado wavered, though. The look Hannibal gave him was serious, too much so to be another game.

“Right now, your body is working to sustain a life it was not made to create. Most of the nutrients you consume are being used to sustain the presence of an additional organ. I supplement whatever your body needs through your medication, as well as preventing rejection and injecting nutrients directly into the womb. With such chaos, there is a chance your body could not sustain the stress of another surgery at this point.”

Will gaped at him. “Then what was your plan for *removing* it?”

Hannibal settled a hand on his shoulder. Will smacked it away, furious. Hannibal sighed. “I’ve been using hormonal treatments to encourage your body to produce and store more resources. You may have noticed some bloating. In the next few months, surgery should be less of a risk, but by then…”

By then the cluster of cells growing inside of Will would have grown, transformed. By then, Will would already be attached, and Hannibal knew it.

Will wondered if he could use this as evidence that Hannibal had taken him against his will. He could show up on Jack’s doorstep and get his life back. Have a doctor whose license *hadn’t* been revoked deliver his baby.

Even as Will thought it, he knew he wasn’t serious. He couldn’t go back to his old life, not now.

But he could still be furious.

“Where are you going?” Hannibal asked, when Will shoved past him.

“None of your business. A walk.”

“Will.” Hannibal grabbed his arm, holding tightly. “I’ve just told you your body can’t handle stress.”

“It’s a *walk.* Let go!”

“If you get hurt -”

“Then stop,” Will turned to him, eyes dark in his anger, “stressing me out. And let me go.”

Hannibal considered holding tighter, he considered dragging Will into his embrace and holding him still until he could press hard enough to his carotid to make him lose consciousness. He considered confining Will to a bed for eight months - for his safety, for Hannibal’s, for the baby’s.

In the end he released him, watching Will storm away and slam their front door so hard the glass at the top of it rattled. He supposed that while that could have gone better, it certainly could have also gone much worse.

Will, for his part, had no idea where he was going, he just knew that if he didn’t get out of the house, as far from Hannibal as he possibly could get, he would beat the man to a pulp on their kitchen floor.

The idea was still tempting, so Will walked faster.

It was almost too absurd to contemplate, yet entirely not something he would have put past Hannibal to do. His every tableaux for the FBI had been a bastardization of certain renaissance paintings, ‘love letters’ to Will, so why shouldn’t he consider Will’s body his own personal Frankenstein experiment? But this was worse, this was inhuman, it was *insane* .

Will forced himself to breathe through his nose so he wasn't sick again in the middle of the street. The last thing they needed was someone calling an ambulance on him.

God, what if someone found out? What if someone *saw?*

Will knew how pregnancy worked, knew that people with a uterus were able to carry children to term and bear them but *he wasn't supposed to* . He wasn't built for that. His body wasn't made to -

God, he would swell, and get bigger, and have to find a way to keep himself from doing damage to this poor thing he didn't even *want* and now had to keep alive.

For the first time in a long time, Will wanted a cigarette. Badly.

"I'm going to be a terrible father." He said it out loud, as if to test the flavor. It tasted right, sat exactly so on the tip of his tongue. He rested his palm over his belly. God, would he even be able to move when it neared full size?

"You deserve better than us," he said to his mostly-flat stomach, "but I guess this is what you get. Lucky you."

He felt ridiculous. He wasn't even sure it had ears yet, or any sort of feature. He'd never had to think about it before. He was woefully underprepared for pregnancy, and more than a bit resentful of the fact that *Hannibal* no doubt knew exactly what their child looked like, how big it was, where it stood developmentally.

If he was going to do this, he was certainly not going to let Hannibal Goddamn Lecter be a better parent than he was.

When Will finally stormed back into the house, Hannibal was cooking. They'd already had dinner, but cooking seemed to be the only way he could hold himself together. Will glared at him, leaning against the cool marble of the kitchen island.

"You can sleep in the spare room," he said. They'd been creeping towards intimacy, until now, but if Hannibal thought he was going to play out *conceiving* this baby, he could go fuck himself. "You can move all your stuff before bed. In my *condition* , I deserve the king sized bed and the master bath."

Hannibal just looked at him, took in Will's anger, breathed in his panic, let his shoulders settle from their tension now that Will had returned home. Hannibal had worried, for Will's entire walk, that he wouldn't. That this would be the final straw. That he would leave. He inclined his head and didn't manage to get even the start of Will's name past his lips before the man was turning on his heel and heading upstairs.

Hannibal let him go, lips pursed but expression clear. Perhaps a few days would allow Will the space and time to come to terms with this new reality for them, and see it as Hannibal's most precious gift to them both.

A few days weren't enough.

Will didn't speak to Hannibal for a full two of them, and on the third he kept his answers short and blunt, not even looking at him when he was near. He deliberately drank coffee, though Hannibal had gently suggested he start to cut back. He insisted on carrying things around the house, despite how dangerous any heavy lifting could be.

In the end, Hannibal caught his wrist and held Will still until the man was calm enough to turn and look at him on his own.

"What do you want from me?" Will asked, resigned, exhausted.

"I just want you, Will."

Will swallowed, shrugged. "Yeah, well. You've got me carrying part of you in me, not sure what else I can give you."

"I'm sorry."

"Are you, though?" Will frowned. "Or are you just sorry you couldn't pull this off without me figuring it out until my belly started to show?"

"I should have… consulted you."

"There's a fucking thought."

"Will," Hannibal didn't whine, he never whined, but his tone was plaintive. Will sighed, allowed himself to step closer.

"Tell me you at least understand just how *violating* this is for me. Tell me you have enough humanity to understand that."

Hannibal ran gentle fingers over Will's jaw and then cupped his cheeks in both hands. He seemed to be genuinely considering the question, unwilling to lie or simply spout off whatever he thought Will wanted to hear.

"Regret is difficult for me," he finally said. Will shook his head.

"I'm not asking for regret. I want your empathy."

"I know it's upsetting," Hannibal said, reluctant. "I know it's invasive and violating for you. Knowing is not the same as feeling guilt. I can't, Will. I want this too much."

It was something. It was more than Will had expected to get, certainly.

And it was the first mention Hannibal had made of his own desires.

"You want this?" Will asked quietly. "This wasn't just some experiment, some other way to stab at me?"

Hannibal looked at Will for the first time in genuine shock. His eyes searched Will's face for a panicked moment before he leaned in to press their foreheads together with a sigh.

“Did you think that?”

“What else could I think?”

“Will,” Hannibal looked at him again, slipped his fingers into Will’s hair as his other hand continued to touch his face. “Not that. Never that. I want this with you, for you. To have a family together. To settle, to grow. And this…” he didn’t know how to justify this any further, he was lost. It was rare he was ever lost. “This felt like the most intimate way to achieve that. A gift I could give you when I had torn other chances away from you so cruelly.”

Will listened, took the words in, found himself sagging in exhaustion and accepting the embrace Hannibal immediately offered him. Support. Comfort. Safety.

Permanence.

Family.

“God, what a mess we both are,” Will whispered harshly, gritting his teeth before turning his face against Hannibal’s neck. “How the hell are we going to raise a child?”

“How does anyone raise a child?”

By now, Will was used to Hannibal’s non-answers. He rolled his eyes, huffed out a sharp breath against the pulse beneath his lips. “I’m still angry,” he warned. “I don’t know if I can ever *not* be angry about this.”

“All I ask for is an opportunity.”

Will pulled back, giving Hannibal a stern look. “One. Just one. If you *ever* try something like this again I will call the FBI myself and lead them straight to our door.”

Hannibal didn’t look nearly as concerned as Will thought he should. Instead, he pressed their foreheads together, eyes closed and a fond smile on his face.

He didn’t have any other family. Neither of them did. And if it weren’t for the part of it where he felt like a science experiment, Will could *almost* see the appeal. He sighed.

“Just one,” he repeated.

“Of course.”

Will didn’t ask why they couldn’t have just adopted a child, find another lost and brutal soul like Abigail Hobbs and take them in. He didn’t ask because he knew; Hannibal had taken her away in his anger, he had witnessed when the opportunity for Will to father a child had been similarly destroyed and had seen his pain.

Will had never wanted to pass on his biology to a child, but the thought of being a father…

He had been a good father to Wally. He had enjoyed being a father to him. But Wally had already been raised by a strong mother and a capable woman. How would the two of them

raise a child from infancy and -

He didn't want to think about it. He didn't want to think about anything to do with it at all, he just wanted it to be done, for them to live with this and come what may.

Will turned to kiss Hannibal's cheek. "I feel like the goddamn virgin Mary."

"Because of the virgin birth?"

"I'm not -" Will narrowed his eyes when Hannibal's smile spread enough to show his teeth. He wanted to hit him. "Why do I put up with you?"

Hannibal didn't offer an answer. They both knew why.

And as they left the deck to head down into the house again, Will considered that no, it wasn't the entirely unnatural concept of a virgin birth - or in his case a birth from a body never made for carrying a living creature within it - but the idea that because of such unnaturalness their child would be a figure akin to the antichrist.

And they still had months to go.

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

“Is it okay?”

“I’m not sure,” Hannibal admitted.

For a few moments, Will managed to stay quiet. But only a few. “How can you not be sure?”

“This isn’t my area of expertise,” Hannibal replied. Will cursed.

“No fucking shit, Hannibal. Remind me again why you did this in the first place?”

Chapter Notes

A huge thank you to Alex our beta for being a total badass :D

The first week or so was okay. The symptoms bothered him less now that he understood *why* they were happening, but they were still fairly consistent.

Also consistent was Hannibal, and his morning and evening checks.

“You’re at about ten weeks,” he explained one night, wrapping a measuring tape around Will’s waist. Will tried not to fidget. He’d noticed some bloating, but at first he’d dismissed it as puffiness from the surgery. An additional organ pressing at his insides.

Now, though, he watched Hannibal jot down a number just a bit bigger than the one he’d written the day before. He was definitely growing. Changing. He slept more, he used the bathroom more. His stomach had developed a distinct pouch.

“The fetus will look more like an infant,” Hannibal explained. “It will be less than two inches long, but distinct features will be forming. Such as ears,” He added, inspecting Will’s expression.

Hannibal wrote down everything in a little notebook he’d helpfully labeled “Prenatal Development.” He touched Will around the middle, constantly. He measured and weighed and seemed to carry a complete textbook in his head.

Will hadn't even known the baby had *ears* . He cupped his stomach, frowning. "It can hear us?"

"Consciousness will come later," Hannibal said. "The brain has not yet developed. But it will be capable of taking in sound."

"So it can *hear* us." Will summarized. He wasn't sure how to feel about that.

As a young man, when he'd finally understood what consequences could follow for the young woman if they didn't use condoms, Will had found the idea of a living thing growing in a woman's womb fascinating. And in truth, how was it not fascinating? How was it not miraculous? A human body growing and sustaining and keeping alive another living thing.

It was incredible.

But he'd never thought about it in regards to himself. He was certain no man ever had.

When it was in *himself,* it was as miraculous as it was terrifying; like a parasite eating away at Will's nutrients and stealing them from his blood. Some nights he woke in a panic, hands to his stomach, remembering the dream he'd had as Hannibal had put the little thing in him. The two images were entwined in his mind since. It was hard to shake.

"It can hear vibrations and tones," Hannibal was saying when Will forced himself to listen again. "It can differentiate between my voice and yours, perhaps, but it can't hear what we say, nor can it understand."

"You're not going to put headphones on my belly to make it listen to Mozart are you?" Will snorted. Hannibal gave him an amused look.

"I'm open to suggestions in regards to its classical music education."

"You're a shit." Will told him with a laugh, shaking his head. Classical music was the least of his problems.

The first trimester was terrible for Will. He was sick every morning, sometimes later in the day as well. Sometimes he got vertigo when he was sitting still. Sometimes he damn near ate the entirety of their fridge and pantry, the combination of flavors ranging from complementary to utterly absurd.

Hannibal had walked in on him eating gherkins and jam once. Will's expression had kept the man from offering his opinion on the matter.

Hannibal kept promising he would feel better as time went on, but Will's second trimester dawned with just as much unease as the first had had.

What did people who were *supposed* to be pregnant do for nine months? Sit around letting their mad scientist partners blare opera into their abdomen? Watch their pants size increase with a gradual horror?

Hannibal adjusted so much better. At night, he would curl into Will's side, place his hand over his stomach, and begin to whisper. Sometimes Italian, sometimes French. Sometimes what sounded like poetry in a language Will couldn't recognize.

Will had managed a "hi, baby," once, and he immediately felt stupid.

But then, Hannibal would have already done this, at least once. He'd been much younger when his sister was born, but he might have memories of it. He had a leg up on Will, whose longest relationships had shorter shelf lives than some loaves of bread.

Twelve weeks in, Will was curled up with a book, ignoring the insistent throb of his bladder. He'd already gone less than an hour ago, and to get to the bathroom, he would need to pass the kitchen. If he walked past Hannibal, Hannibal would want to ask him invasive questions, and he wasn't feeling up to that today.

But the baby was not fond of giving him choices. Hannibal said it likely put more pressure on his bladder than it would have had he been meant for pregnancy, due to the lack of space in his abdomen. He'd started rubbing lotion on Will's belly to encourage the skin to stretch, something that was both oddly sweet and terrifying.

With a sigh, Will stood, stretching his arms over his head. His back arched. His stomach tightened.

Something gave a little flutter of protest, low in his belly.

"Oh *fuck!* " he said, startled. From the kitchen, he heard something clatter into the sink.

Hannibal was at his side in an instant, one hand on Will's stomach the other at his shoulder, prepared to catch him if he lost his balance.

"What is it?"

Will shook his head. "I'm not sure?" he sat back down again, breathing out slowly through his mouth as he did, hands gentle on his stomach as Hannibal tugged up his shirt. Will tried not to look at his stomach often. Scars didn't *bother* him so much as he had so many that he wasn't sure there was anything there but scar tissue now.

"There was like, a pressure?"

"Like a kick?"

"Maybe?" Will looked at Hannibal, brows furrowed. "It…kicks aren't supposed to hurt, right?"

Hannibal paled in a way Will hadn't ever seen him before, he kept his eyes on Will a moment longer before leaning down to press his ear to Will's stomach. As often as he'd done this, claiming to Will that he enjoyed the sound of the shifting and hushing of his blood, he'd never looked so concerned. Will was about to tell him to forget about it when the pressure came again.

“Shit, *fuck* , God that hurts!” Will tried to curl up on himself but Hannibal held him as upright as possible. “What the hell? It’s not been nine months yet?”

“Will, you need to lie down.”

“What’s it doing?”

“I’m not sure,” Hannibal admitted. “But you need to be as relaxed as possible right now.”

“Relaxed?” Will laughed, helpless. “I need to go to the bathroom! It kicks me again and we’re going to have a mess on our hands.”

“I’ll clean it,” Hannibal replied, not playful as he normally would have been, now looking grave and concentrated in a way that really didn’t help Will’s anxiety.

“Hannibal…” he said, voice tight with worry. His stomach cramped again. Face drawn, Hannibal forcibly guided Will back down onto the couch, spreading him out on his back.

“Do not move,” he said. As a general rule, they treated each other as equals. Now, Hannibal’s voice was nothing less than a command. He threw a blanket over Will almost as an afterthought, disappearing down the hall with uncharacteristically heavy footsteps.

He returned with his entire medical kit, kneeling beside Will with his stethoscope. He slid it under Will’s shirt, brow furrowed as he listened.

“What is it?” Will started to sit up and found himself shoved back down.

“Stay. I need to listen.”

Hannibal listened intently for a few minutes, as Will’s cramps slowly eased. He rubbed gentle circles over Will’s skin with his free hand, soothing both Will and the panicked flutter inside him.

“Is it okay?”

“I’m not sure,” Hannibal admitted.

For a few moments, Will managed to stay quiet. But only a few. “How can you not be sure?”

“This isn’t my area of expertise,” Hannibal replied. Will cursed.

“No fucking shit, Hannibal. Remind me again why you did this in the first place?”

Will regretted the words as soon as he spoke them and bit his tongue. One hand reached out to curl around Hannibal’s wrist as he held the stethoscope to his belly still. Will tried not to breathe. His stomach hurt. He desperately needed to pee. He wanted to throw up. He didn’t know what to do.

“What are we going to do if it has to come out?” Will asked after a moment, very quietly. Hannibal swallowed softly.

“Early?” He asked, unnecessarily. “A cesarean, as initially planned.”

“You said that would kill us both.”

“I…may have exaggerated,” Hannibal replied, letting his eyes move to look at Will, no hint of remorse, but with a little chagrin. Will blinked at him.

“What did you exaggerate exactly?”

“You are fragile in this state,” Hannibal evaded. “It is already such a delicate balance between —”

“What did you *exaggerate* ?”

“You are only in danger if sepsis occurs,” Hannibal replied. “In case of organ rejection, or the death of the fetus before it came to term.”

Will stared at him as he processed the words. Then, silent in his fury, he hefted the nearest object and smacked it against Hannibal’s head.

Fortunately for Hannibal, the nearest object was a pillow, and the worst it did was throw his hair into disarray. Will hit it with him again, and a third time before Hannibal managed to wrest it from him.

“You told me it couldn’t come out —“ Will yelled. “You told me it would *kill* me, you swore —“

Hannibal had to grab for his wrists next, pinning flailing fists.

“Will, you need to remain calm. The baby —“

“The baby I told you to get rid of!” A gift Will had never wanted. One he’d accepted while filled with fear and worry, one he’d taken only so that he did not deny Hannibal once more.

And now, one which fluttered in his stomach when he woke. One which twisted and turned when Hannibal played it music. Will yanked his hand free of Hannibal’s, settling it low over his belly. The kicks weren’t strong enough to be felt from the outside yet, but he imagined he felt a flutter in response.

“You did this to me,” he whispered. “You did this, this is *your* fault, so figure it out.”

“Will —“

“If it dies,” Will hissed, teeth bared, “if you put me through all of this and I *lose it,* I’ll kill you.”

Hannibal did not doubt Will’s conviction. He looked him in the eyes until Will looked away, nearly shoving at Hannibal’s hands as he pushed himself to sit up.

“Will —”

“I’m going to the bathroom,” was all he said, taking his time to stand before making his way there. He was humiliated enough already without a mess in their house to clean up.

Whatever had happened wasn’t happening again. Maybe Will had just shifted funny; maybe it wasn’t anything serious. In truth, he worried that it was more serious than he was letting himself believe. He worried that whatever was happening would put an end to this madness and leave Will entirely bereft.

He had returned or ignored too many gifts already.

As the day progressed, no more cramps and no more agony. Will kept one hand under his shirt and over his stomach the entire time, his breath easing when he felt even the slightest shift. It meant the baby was alive still, squirming and fussy but alive.

“Hang in there, kiddo,” Will murmured, eyes in the middle distance. Hannibal was in the kitchen again and far enough away not to hear. Will swallowed. “You have no idea what’s awaiting you out here and I’m so sorry. But you hang in there.”

A little kick was his only answer.

A week after the incident, Hannibal returned home and called for Will.

“Living room!” It got the most light throughout the day, and Will could have the doors open wide into the garden to let the breeze through. When he wasn’t aching his way back and forth from the bathroom or kitchen, Will was in a constant battle with his internal thermostat; he couldn’t seem to control his body temperature like he used to. One moment he was sweating, the next he shivered. He kept a blanket on the back of the couch for an easy solution, but it hardly made him feel better.

When Hannibal didn’t immediately answer, Will pushed himself up to look over the back of the couch, seeking him out, and froze at what he saw.

The pup was a tiny thing, barely the size of the hand Hannibal held it in. A long haired Chihuahua puppy, squirming with delight and lapping at Hannibal’s fingers.

“Oh my god,” Will whispered. Tears sprung to his eyes, unbidden. He thought of their previous lives very rarely, if he were honest, but he missed the dogs more than anything. They couldn’t be replaced, not when he’d known each of them so well, but this little thing… “Oh my god.”

“Don’t get up,” Hannibal said, stepping closer. It was becoming a tiresome phrase, but whenever he could keep Will seated, he did. The cramps hadn’t returned, and Hannibal said it was likely normal (or whatever passed for normal in this fiasco), but they were both cautious.

Hannibal deposited the puppy gently into Will’s lap. She gave a happy little yip, immediately shoving her nose against Will’s stomach to sniff him.

Will looked up at Hannibal and suddenly found himself looking through blurry eyes, tears spilling over in great shuddering waves.

Hannibal crouched beside him, pulling Will's head against his shoulder. Will cried into it, one hand clutching at Hannibal and the other coaxing the puppy to curl against him.

"If you always apologize like this, I might let you experiment on me more often," Will joked, voice raw.

Hannibal laughed, turning his nose against Will's hair before kissing him there. "As tempting as that is, I doubt your body could sustain another pregnancy."

"Thank fuck," Will admitted, sniffing, when he was allowed to pull away he took a steadying breath and lifted the tiny animal. "Hi. God, you're so tiny, you don't weigh a thing."

Hannibal remained near, allowing Will to coddle and stroke the little pup as she caught his thumb to chew gently against or yipped in joy when Will found a happy spot to tickle. When Will set her down to the floor, she was off like a shot, sniffing everything she could find, barking excitedly at her own reflection in the TV cabinet, before leaving a fairly impressive puddle on the carpet in her excitement and bounding off again.

Will snorted, eyes on Hannibal as the other sighed. "Consider it diaper practice," Will offered. Hannibal couldn't even bring up the energy to retort.

They named the little dog Artemis, Artie for short, and she became Will's little shadow. She was still too tiny to jump up onto the couch or down from it, but Will hardly needed effort to lift her tiny form from the floor and place her on his chest or to bring her back down again so she could explore.

He trained her as he had all his dogs, with patience and a reward system. No punishments, no fear. Within two weeks Artie knew basic commands, waited for her food instead of plunging her little nose right into the bowl, and understood that standing by the door meant she wanted to go out and one of them would let her. Hannibal, Will found to his pleased amusement, was just as smitten with the tiny thing. If she wasn't napping on Will's belly, she was spread out in puppy joy over Hannibal's legs as he lazily stroked her stomach and scrolled his tablet.

As much as the aches and pains and exhaustion frustrated Will, what was even worse, he found, was how inexplicably horny he was so much of the time. He'd never been averse to sex, but suddenly a thought would enter his mind and Will's blood would migrate to between his legs so quickly he was dizzy with it. Most days he would relieve himself with a quick stroke of practiced hands, but sometimes…

"Hannibal." Will rolled atop him, pinning to the bed. Hannibal blinked drowsily up at him, glancing towards the clock. Will already knew what it said. He'd been watching the hands tick closer to 1 AM for an hour now, trying to ignore the boil of his blood in his veins.

"Again?" Hannibal asked, his hands gliding up Will's back, rucking his T-shirt up.

“I can’t sleep,” Will pleaded. Hannibal may have been tired, but he hardly looked put out as he rolled Will onto his back, then to his side when Will protested the pressure.

They’d learned how they fit together, since Will had healed enough to try, but it still felt like something new whenever Hannibal set lips to his throat and spread him wide with patient fingers.

“God,” Will groaned, reaching back to dig his nails into Hannibal’s hip.

“Be still,” Hannibal reminded him. “I’ll take care of you, but you shouldn’t jostle yourself too roughly.”

“I need it,” Will insisted, “you take too long.”

Hannibal’s lips quirked into a smile against his skin. “I’ll miss these moods of yours,” he said, “but one day I’ll have to show you exactly how long I would take, given the opportunity to enjoy you.”

Will growled, pushing back against the fingers that stretched him. “Don’t you dare.”

“You won’t have much say in the matter,” Hannibal replied, though his voice was playful rather than commanding. “Perhaps I’ll tie your hands to the bed, spread your legs, take my time kissing up your thighs…”

Will groaned, displeased and needy, but the words went straight to his cock. He wanted it. He wanted everything. He had been the one to finally initiate something intimate between them, his hand going for Hannibal’s belt as he’d come home and Will pried his lips open with a kiss. They’d jerked each other off, noses brushing together and soft sounds of need mingled with hot breath against each other’s faces.

It had felt good.

It had felt really good.

Will had taken to looking up porn some nights when he couldn’t sleep at all and ended up on the couch with the television burbling something in quick quiet French. Artie slept at his feet, kicking in her sleep but not disturbing him as Will had dived deeper and deeper into the pleasures of gay sex.

The more he watched, the more he wanted to try, and the more he hated that he couldn’t.

Not yet.

Not until all of this was over.

But it didn’t stop him from damn near throwing himself at Hannibal when his need got too much; it didn’t stop him from whispering his fantasies into Hannibal’s ear as the man cooked and Will distracted him.

Hannibal allowed him sweet touches, the heat of his mouth. Fingers, if Will would lie still and not try to ride them. Generally, sex was a normal, healthy part of pregnancy, but that was for people whose organs weren't all crammed together in very little space. And topping Hannibal, while clearly something Hannibal would welcome, was still stuck on the "too strenuous" list.

Will could have this, though. Hannibal's fingers inside him, his free arm wrapped around Will's expanding waistline. Hannibal's lips against his ear whispering filthy things while Will squirmed and whined his displeasure.

"I'll open you up so slowly," Hannibal promised, crooking his fingers against the sensitive spot that made Will gasp.

"No," Will insisted, "no more slow."

"Oh yes," Hannibal assured him. "When I'm inside you for the first time, I want to be the only thing you can think about."

" *Fuck."*

"I've got you, Will. Let go."

Will groaned, his orgasm cresting like a wave and tensing his entire body. One hand pressed to Hannibal's where it wrapped around his stomach, one clung to the sheets, and Will rode out his pleasure with a shuddering intensity.

Will cursed, turning his face into the pillow as he caught his breath and Hannibal continued to torment him with practiced fingers. He relented when Will's breath hitched, too sensitive to take any more and too exhausted to demand Hannibal stop. Instead, Hannibal's wide palms drew smooth and slow over Will's thighs, against his sides, up into his hair.

Will shifted back against him with a hum of pleasure. "I'm either tired or horny. I can't live like this."

Hannibal kissed his cheek with a smile.

"A few months more."

Will snorted. "And then I'll just be tired."

Hannibal didn't argue, just pulled Will back against him and stroked a hand through his hair until he settled into sleep.

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Will hated how emotional he got lately. He understood why, and that was perhaps why he felt angrier about it. Because this was not supposed to happen, this was not meant to be how his life played out. Hell, he hadn't expected to fall heart and soul for a serial killer, but even that was more probable than falling pregnant.

Some angst, some feels, some fluff, and some lovin'

Chapter Notes

A huge thank you to our legendary beta Alex!!

"You are one sick fuck."

Big words, considering Hannibal had been the one to put this baby *in him,* but Will was really not in the mood. He had his arms crossed over his chest. His belly bulged obscenely now and Will often had to resort to plodding about the house wrapped in a blanket because nothing he owned could cover it properly.

So Hannibal had gone shopping.

"I think it's rather tasteful."

"I'm really starting to doubt your *taste,* Hannibal," Will muttered. At his feet, Artie yipped and set her tiny paws to Will's shin. He ducked his head to her. "I know, it's messed up."

"Will."

"I'm not wearing...whatever the fuck *that is* ."

"They're merely clothes to accommodate your condition."

Will gave him a baleful stare. "You know that's not what I find tasteless, Hannibal."

The clothes themselves weren't terrible. Sure, Will wasn't a huge fan of pastel colors but he could understand that it would be rare that someone naturally pregnant would want to wear lumberjack flannel around the house. That he could deal with. What was boiling his blood was the bag *beside* that one, very obviously —

“ *Lingerie* , Hannibal? You realize we’re in a frankly unique position in that I happened to not only get pregnant, but to do it *before* we’ve even *fucked* , don’t you?” Will pointed an accusing finger at him. “And that is *entirely* on you by the way.”

“A minimal amount of physical strain is best for the baby,” Hannibal told him for what felt like the thousandth time. “You *should* be on bed rest.”

“Don’t start with that again,” Will snapped. “I’m not even into the third trimester yet. What am I supposed to do for four more months, lie there like a human turducken while you get your rocks off? In *panties* ,” he added with a scowl.

“You need to be cautious, but you needn’t be celibate,” Hannibal said, in that ‘I’m completely reasonable while you are ruled by emotion like a mere mortal’ tone he’d been adopting lately. Will was going to rip his tongue out one of these days. “You’ve been complaining lately about your appearance. I thought, perhaps, a change in aesthetics —“

“Do *not* look me in the eyes and tell me you wanted me to feel *pretty.* ” Giving the lingerie bag one final look of disdain, Will grabbed the first maternity shirt he could reach without stooping and turned on his heel. He had sweatpants that still fit in the laundry room somewhere. “Artie and I are going to enjoy the sunshine. You can enjoy your fetish-wear on your own.”

Will’s dramatic exit was ruined somewhat by his waddling gait, but so be it.

The sweatpants did *not* still fit, and the shirt Will grabbed turned out to be a maternity *dress.* Plain and loose, in a dark navy shade rather than pastel, but still a *dress.* In an attempt to resist murdering his husband for *daring* , Will instead curled up in the study, naked as usual. Hannibal was an idiot. He was an idiot, and *selfish* , and Will just wanted, for one minute, to wear something that didn’t make him feel like a science experiment.

Will hated how emotional he got lately. He understood why, and that was perhaps why he felt angr *ier* about it. Because this was not supposed to happen, this was not meant to be how his life played out. Hell, he hadn’t expected to fall heart and soul for a serial killer, but even that was more probable than falling *pregnant* .

And it was true, he hated how he looked. He’d never been particularly vain, and considering how he’d dressed for work no one could say that Will Graham was particularly *stylish,* but he’d always been slim, he’d always been svelte. And now he felt like a goddamn balloon. His back hurt. His feet hurt. His head was killing him. He couldn’t go an hour without having to pee. Sometimes he couldn’t keep his food down. He was sweaty and exhausted and irritable and god *damn* Hannibal and his fetishes, trying to turn them into something for *Will* . Goddamn him.

Will didn’t even realize he was crying until Artie was gently pawing at his face, back feet firmly planted *right* over Will’s goddamn scar. That dog had the same knack as Hannibal for finding painful things without meaning to. Will picked her up and let her lick his face, laughing despite himself.

“You’re a little terror,” he mumbled, gently scratching her ears as Artie wriggled. He set her to the floor. “Go pee in his shoes or something.”

Artie flopped down into a wonky little sit and regarded Will for a while, tail sweeping over the floor behind her before she pushed up to stand again, shook herself, sneezed, and trotted off.

The moment of reprieve was welcome but brief, and Will kept his eyes in the middle distance as he continued to cry quietly. There was nothing else he could do. There was no way in hell they were losing this baby just because Will was having a bad day, but *fuck* it was hard sometimes. There was still that itch at the back of Will’s mind that this was entirely for *Hannibal* and not for *him* . For Hannibal to fawn over him and dress him and medicate him while Will suffered.

That wasn’t fair.

Was it fair?

Will didn’t even know anymore.

When warm hands settled on his shoulders Will tilted his head down against one with a gentle sob, and sucked his top lip into his mouth.

“We’re doing this all backwards,” Will said, voice rough from lack of use. “You’re supposed to buy me sexy things *before* we sleep together, and *definitely* before a fucking *baby.* ”

“Does it help that I’ve considered us intimately acquainted for some time now?” Hannibal murmured into his hair.

“You’ve been inside me,” Will said ruefully, rubbing his palm over the smile across his belly. Hannibal sighed into his hair.

“Will you believe me if I say this was not meant to distress you?”

Will thought about it, rubbing salt from his cheeks. “Maybe,” he finally said. He wasn’t feeling positive enough to give Hannibal the benefit of the doubt. “It still feels like something you did for *you* . Not with me in mind.”

Hannibal came around to the front of the couch. Reluctantly, Will scooted over to give him room. With even more hesitation, he allowed himself to be pulled from his blanket cocoon and settled against Hannibal’s chest. Hannibal laid back, pulling Will with him until they were both stretched out.

“I find you appealing like this,” Hannibal said, resting a hand over the curve of Will’s belly. Will flinched, and Hannibal hastened to continue. “I find you appealing in every form you may take. But I cannot help but take pleasure in seeing this transformation. You are radiant, Will. You’ve performed a miracle.”

Will snorted. “ *You’ve* performed a miracle. I was unconscious for that part.”

“And yet it’s you who holds and protects our child, you who keeps it safe. It would not exist without you to care for it.”

Will nuzzled up under Hannibal’s chin and sighed against him. He was still angry, but he was angry as often as he was horny and tired and excited. He couldn’t remember not having this little being within him, now, ridiculous as it sounded. He woke to the shift and shove as it moved about, settled its little kicks with a hum and a palm to his stomach.

He noticed that it settled when Hannibal spoke against his belly, when Hannibal’s hand spread warm over Will’s damaged skin. It knew them, whatever that meant. Perhaps the only other creature on this Earth able to make that claim.

“What would make you comfortable?” Hannibal asked him after a while. “Anything in my power, I’ll do.”

Will laughed humorlessly but he considered regardless.

“I want to be able to doze on my belly again,” he said, laughing right after. “Hell if you can make that happen but god I miss it. I want to be able to put on a pair of pants and not have them slide down my ass. I don’t want much, I don’t —” he bit his lip turning a little more into Hannibal as he held him. “I don’t want you to change the world for me. I actually don’t want any more change, if we can help it.”

Hannibal kissed the top of Will’s head and said nothing. After a while, they dozed, Will heavy and too-warm on top of him, Artie scratching at the side of the couch she couldn’t jump up onto on her own yet. Sleepily, Hannibal scooped her up and let her make a little nest at their feet.

The next day, he presented Will with an inflatable pool ring, and Will’s laugh was bright and wonderful.

“We don’t have a pool!”

“I didn’t buy it for the water,” Hannibal replied, stepping closer. “I bought it,” he moved further into the house, Will following, and dropped the ring onto their bed. “For you to be able to rest on your stomach when you nap.”

That earned another small burst of laughter from Will’s lips, and he shook his head. “This is ridiculous.” Even as he said it, he crept closer to the bed, his curiosity piqued.

“You asked for a solution,” Hannibal said. He reached for Will, helping to guide him into place, his palm resting on the base of Will’s spine as Will wriggled to get comfortable.

After a long moment, Will sighed, tucking his face into the plush comfort of his pillow. “Alright. Acceptable.” His smile said it was far more than that, and though he hadn’t been preparing for a nap before, he made no effort to get back up.

“I also ordered you some more maternity pants,” Hannibal said. He rested both hands over Will’s lower back, slowly beginning to work the knots that had formed there. “Black. With

elastic waistbands."

Will moaned with more pleasure than he typically showed when they lay in bed together, bringing a smirk to Hannibal's lips.

"Why are those the greatest words in the English language?" Will asked, his eyes slipping closed.

"I'm going to give you a massage and make something unbelievably spicy for dinner."

Will's moan this time was bordering on obscene. "I've changed my mind, *those* are the greatest words in the English language."

Hannibal laughed and bent to kiss softly against Will's hair. He continued his massage, concentrating on Will's lower back, between his shoulders, down his arms. By the time he was just stroking Will's skin, the other was dozing, comfortable and pliant. Hannibal kissed his cheek.

"Thank you," Will mumbled, smiling when Hannibal moved to kiss the corner of his mouth next. "I'm sorry I'm a grumpy shit."

"I knew that when I fell in love with you."

"Well," Will sighed, groaning a little as he shifted, still perfectly content to rest face down on the inflatable ring. "I know hormones exacerbate it. You do a lot for me I'm not often grateful for."

"Your gratitude need not be spoken," Hannibal assured him. Will just turned his face against Hannibal's a little more in a nuzzle. He knew it was true, but he also knew that more often than not he fell into his own head and radiated angst throughout the house. They could both do better.

"I love you." Will told him. Hannibal stroked his hair and kissed his temple.

"Sleep. I'll wake you for dinner."

Between the inner tube and the comfortable flannel sleepwear that arrived in the mail, sleep came far easier to Will. He spent long hours resting, particularly once his ankles began to bloat and ache if he stood for too long.

Everything ached, actually. His body wasn't shaped properly for the weight gain, and Will's hips and lower back were regularly screaming at him. He'd developed a sensitivity to pretty much any kind of contact as well, and…

"What are you giving me?"

It had taken Will long enough to question the variety of pills and shots Hannibal loaded him up with, but his suspicions had grown too great. He folded a protective arm over his belly, scowling at the medicine Hannibal offered.

In answer, Hannibal rattled off a list of official-sounding terms. Will noted that they seemed almost purposefully unrecognizable.

“And what do they *do* ?”

Hannibal hesitated. Will had suspected he would.

“Whichever one of those is making my chest hurt, throw it out,” Will demanded. Hannibal’s fist closed around the pills. Will could see him carefully considering his next words.

“Will, the benefits of breastfeeding —”

“No,” Will said flatly.

“It will hardly be the oddest thing you’ve done,” Hannibal said slowly. “With the right combination of medication, lactation can be induced in any male —”

“Then *you* can feed the baby,” Will said, his voice falsely sweet. “Throw it out, Hannibal. I can’t believe you thought you’d get away with that.”

Hannibal looked as though he was about to say something and wisely changed his mind. Will could almost predict what was going through that insane head of his: that he'd gotten away with getting — and keeping — Will pregnant. Surely lactation wouldn't be a painful stretch?

Will waited until Hannibal sighed and set aside whatever pills had been causing yet more unnatural changes to his body before taking the rest.

Some were pain killers, natural and herbal, ones that wouldn't harm the infant Will carried. Some were vitamins and minerals to keep him healthier, supplementing nutrientshis body did not naturally provide. Some helped him sleep. Because Will needed the help at night, when he'd envision the most horrific scenarios of what could happen in a few month's time.

"Stress isn't good for either of you," Hannibal explained gently. Will was very close to cussing him out.

"Yeah, well, it's hard to be confident knowing that whatever happens we can't go to a hospital." Will shot back. Because what almighty hell would fall upon them if that became a necessity. "And you're not exactly trained in neonatal care."

“I was an ER surgeon,” Hannibal reminded him. “I worked on patients of all ages.”

“How many of those patients were pregnant men with transplanted uteri?” Will asked, brow raised. Hannibal may have acted confident, but his bravado didn’t fool Will. He didn’t clear his browsing history, and Will knew he’d been doing research into obstetrics.

“I *did* manage the original surgery,” Hannibal reminded him.

“Great. Next time we need to give a man a womb, we’ll know who to call. Do you know what the mortality rate is for a *typical* labor?”

Will did. Will knew quite a bit about the things that could go wrong. Like any expectant parent, he'd done the research, poring over statistics and anecdotal horror stories until he was nauseous. Hannibal had begun to make subtle threats about changing the wifi password.

Hannibal refused to be worried, though, at least in front of Will, and it was *maddening.* Will knew he wasn't the only one reading up, and yet Hannibal insisted on presenting a calm front. It made Will want to shake him.

Hannibal's hands were gentle on Will's shoulders. "Will. Even in the ER, I saw my share of labors. I have personally assisted in a handful of deliveries."

"None of them were *mine* ," Will said, voice strained.

Hannibal moved to crouch in front of Will and gently caught his chin until Will was forced to look at him.

"I know," he said. "I know, Will."

"I just —"

Hannibal kissed him, a gentle thing, almost chaste, and stroked Will's hair. The conversation was over for another little while. Until either Hannibal or Will found something worth worrying over on the world wide panic meter.

When Will couldn't sleep, he wandered. He waddled, more accurately. Around the house in the dark, Artie silent at his feet until she sneezed or plonked herself down on her butt to scratch behind her ear. Then she'd catch up in a pitter patter of tiny claws on the tile and wood.

Often, Will had no destination beyond *move* . There was nowhere really to go, but he couldn't stay in bed and squirm trying to find a comfortable position. And there were only so many times he could annoy Hannibal awake.

One such voyage took Will into the study.

They didn't keep secrets, not anymore, but Will still got a bit of a thrill in seeing one of Hannibal's sketchbooks open on his desk; he'd probably forgotten about it when Will had called for him earlier in the day. Nothing urgent, it rarely was, but enough for even Hannibal Lecter to be a little absentminded.

Within, Will found studies from life. It was Hannibal's favorite genre outside of architecture. Will spooled through studies of dinner plates and shadows, Artie in various positions, her fur beautifully rendered. And himself.

He expected memory. Himself, dripping dragon's blood. Or perhaps even further back, when he'd once cleaned himself up for Hannibal's admiration. And perhaps those sketches existed, somewhere. Perhaps there was a book full of missed opportunity, moments where Hannibal's gaze had lingered hopefully.

This book contained none of them. Instead, Will found himself in repose, sometimes staring off into the distance, unaware of Hannibal's watchful eye, other times fast asleep. Will, in sleep clothes that no longer fit, curled up in their bed with his hand over his still-flat stomach. Will, in the weeks he'd gone bare, tastefully censored by a blanket as he napped in the study, the curve of his belly rendered in as loving detail as the rest of him.

Will, just the day before, reading some trite parenting book with Artie in his lap. He remembered Hannibal sketching, if he thought back, but he'd assumed…

He didn't know what he'd assumed. Not this. Not page after page of Will drawn with such care that his chest ached to look at it.

Hannibal loved him. Will knew this, of course. It was one of the immutable facts of the universe. But on occasion, he wondered if perhaps Hannibal loved him as an extension of himself, or if his affection for their child was born of pride in his own brilliance.

The sketches said otherwise. They were only sketches, but, Will felt the threads of emotion woven through them, Hannibal's love and his desire in equal measures. In the sketches, Will was sometimes honored, other times eroticized, and yet always, always loved.

Will was certain that somewhere, sketches existed of himself as Patrocles, or Ganymede, or perhaps Zeus, given the situation. He preferred this, in its honesty, a raw display of Hannibal's feelings.

"Will."

Hannibal stood in the doorway, having come to draw Will back to bed. He'd gone still, eyeing Will with an expression that was almost wary.

"You make me look too handsome," Will said softly, fingers still on the pages, tracing the line of his thigh Hannibal had drawn. "You never include the flaws."

"We are wired to see flaws in ourselves that others don't perceive as such," Hannibal told him carefully. Will summoned a smile and finally looked over his shoulder.

"Charming, but trite, Hannibal. I'm a mess of scars. I have no feeling over my stomach now, except from the inside. I'm irritable. I eat too much or not enough. I sweat enough to need to change the sheets every fucking night, I'm —"

"Human," Hannibal said, stepping closer. "And in your humanity you are beautiful."

Will offered a false little smile that twitched the corners of his mouth. It was obvious he didn't agree. Obvious that the way Hannibal saw him was who Will *should* have been, not who he was. Surely not who he was. This Frankenstein of memories and hopes, scars and sinew.

"I'm not frowning in any of these."

"Because you weren't," Hannibal supplied helpfully, and Will did laugh then. He turned to Hannibal and pressed his face against his shoulder. He let himself rest there for a moment,

just breathing him in. Even in anger, even in exhaustion, even in irrational worry, Will wanted him. Sometimes so much he ached with it.

“I worry sometimes that you won’t be interested anymore once the experiment is over,” Will murmured against Hannibal’s shoulder. Hannibal shook his head.

“Unlike *some* , I have always found you interesting.”

It took a moment, but Will laughed again, tilting his head to catch Hannibal’s eye. “You still remember that?”

“You were in your underwear at the time,” Hannibal reminded him. “How could I forget?”

“The great Hannibal Lecter,” Will said, “a slave to his base urges like the rest of us.”

“Only ever with you,” Hannibal assured him, “And at that point, it was your mind that captivated me. It still does. I’ve just also learned to appreciate the body that houses it.”

“I don’t even recognize the body anymore,” Will said ruefully. “I’m glad you’re enjoying it. One of us should.”

Hannibal’s hand drifted down to cover his stomach, a momentary pause before he trailed to Will’s hip instead. “Are you aching again? I could fetch pain killers.”

“I just need to wear myself out,” Will said, “so we can get back to bed.”

“There are better ways than haunting the house,” Hannibal suggested, amused, and Will snorted, shaking his head with a shrug.

“I’m open to ideas.”

Hannibal hummed, and gently guided Will to step back until he could lower himself with a groan into Hannibal’s chair. When Will looked up, brow quirked in amusement, Hannibal merely stepped up between his legs and sunk to his knees. Will swallowed.

“Hannibal —”

“Spread your legs for me.”

A flare of desire shot through Will so quickly he was dizzy with it. It was rare they talked when they were intimate, for no other reason than because they wanted to kiss every part of each other they could reach and words didn’t matter. But once in a while, in passing, Will would suggest something, or Hannibal would whisper, and Will’s mind would be in a tailspin.

He hoped, he so desperately hoped, that once he had the baby and his body was more or less his own again, that Hannibal’s words would prove true: that he would find Will interesting, and worthy, and beautiful. And want him, like he wanted him now. More often than not, Will assumed that would be the case, that what he felt on that cliff top and how hard Hannibal had held him when they fell, hadn’t been a passing thing.

Now, though, he just wanted him. He hated that they couldn't finally consummate their relationship. He hated the irony of the situation around it. Some nights he truly, desperately, just needed to be pounded into the mattress.

Will spread his legs.

With a hum of pleasure, Hannibal caught his hands beneath Will's knees and spread him wider, leaning in to kiss lazily against the inside of Will's thigh, teasing closer and closer to where his cock was standing rigid and hot.

"Be still," he reminded Will, as he always did, as if Will could forget how little he was meant to strain himself, with Hannibal trailing him through the house at every turn.

Will fought down a complaint, too eager for contact, for the tempting heat of Hannibal's mouth. It was more power play than medical guidance, he knew, and Hannibal could have whatever mock dominance he liked if he would only give Will what he craved.

Soft kisses, higher and higher, until Hannibal's lips found the base of Will's cock and Will sighed, letting his head drop back. Hannibal mouthed at him, teasing and light, until Will's hand found his hair and tugged.

"Thought you were wearing me out," he murmured.

Hannibal's eyes narrowed with amusement as he took the head into his mouth, sucking hard to hear Will whine.

Will bit his lip and dropped his head back, letting one leg curl around Hannibal's shoulders as he relaxed deeper into his chair.

Hannibal, the bastard, was exceptionally good with his mouth.

When Will had been able to move a little more easily, he'd taken Hannibal apart this way as well, between his legs in bed as Hannibal gripped his hair and shoved the heel of his hand against the headboard and Will drove him mad. He'd loved every second of it; the way Hannibal had trembled, the way his breath had hitched, how he'd moaned Will's name before he came.

Since, Hannibal had been the one with the ability to use his clever tongue on Will, without his stomach hindering him, and in all honesty, Will was not complaining.

"Fuck you're good at that," he sighed, grinning when Hannibal hummed and took Will deeper. Will spread his fingers over Hannibal's scalp and drew his nails over the skin. Hannibal swallowed around him and Will hissed in pleasure. "God, don't stop."

Hannibal didn't.

He worshiped Will with his tongue and breathed him in, allowed himself to look up and watch the swell of Will's stomach rise and fall with every panted breath. Scars upon scars over Will's skin, all made by Hannibal, and Will wore them beautifully. Hannibal never wanted Will to come to harm again, not ever, but he took pride in these.

They spoke of betrayal and forgiveness, of coming together. Of growing.

He pulled back to tease the head of Will's cock and slipped a hand between his legs to rub dry over Will's perineum.

Will let his voice echo, his head back and eyes closed. Hannibal's hands made him think of things he couldn't have, things he wanted so desperately, and that thought only had him leaking, the fantasy vivid in his head.

When this was over, when he had *finally* healed from the havoc Hannibal wrought when he set his mind to something, Will was going to take out his frustrations on Hannibal's body. He was going to have him every way he could, beneath him, over him. He would fuck Hannibal until even his impeccable control slipped, until Hannibal needed the contact just as much as Will did.

Will's fingers tugged at Hannibal's hair, pulling him close until he could feel the soft give of Hannibal's throat. Hannibal never complained. If anything, he preferred Will rough, demanding, greedy in his pleasure.

"God," Will hissed, hips bucking as the pleasure crested and broke, waves beneath his skin that left him tingling. All at once, his strings were cut. He collapsed back into the chair, exhaustion a heavy weight on his shoulders.

Hannibal kissed his thigh again as he pulled away, rubbing soothing circles into his hips with his thumbs. Will blinked down at him, finally tired and uncertain whether he should be grateful for it. He seemed to be able to do less and less per day as time went on, and getting up and walking to the bedroom suddenly seemed an arduous task.

"Carry me," He demanded, one eyebrow raised, as if daring Hannibal to object.

Hannibal mimicked the expression, rubbing a hand over the curve of Will's stomach. "I'm not sure that would be the best of plans."

"You put a tree inside a person once, you can carry me ten steps down the hall."

"Verbally attacking my manhood to get what you want is beneath you, Will," Hannibal told him, but his eyes were narrowed in a smile. Will just offered a one shoulder shrug.

"I could physically attack it if you like."

That was enough to bring a bright grin to Hannibal's face, if only for a moment, and he ducked his head in acquiescence before standing up. He gathered Will to him carefully, and lifted him bridal style, Will's legs draped over one arm as his other supported Will's back. It didn't take long for them to get to the bedroom, but by that time, Will was already dozing, lifting weak fingers to spread over Hannibal's cheek as he was set down against the sheets.

Hannibal kissed his fingertips and nuzzled Will's knuckles. "Can I get you anything?"

"Just you," Will yawned. "In bed."

That, Hannibal supposed, he could do without any effort at all.

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

“Will,” Will glanced over, offering his hand when Hannibal reached for it to find a vein.
“I love you.”
Will swallowed. “I know.”

BABY'S HERE!

More often than not, Will found he was most comfortable in the bath. The water took his weight and held it and he could relax in a way that not the bed, the inflatable ring, or even Hannibal himself could allow. Sometimes he stayed in there for well over an hour, dozing.

By Hannibal’s calculations, Will was a month out from delivery, though who knew what would happen considering the strangeness of this entire endeavor. Will was just about done with being pregnant. He was exhausted. He hurt everywhere. And he’d been thinking more and more about just *how* the delivery would happen.

And when they’d know to do it.

It wasn’t as though his water would break, and his body would flood with hormones signalling the baby was ready to come out. He had no idea how he would know to tell Hannibal that it was *fucking time* to get this kid out of him; he didn’t have maternal instincts, and he felt as though he had no paternal ones either.

That, honestly, scared him even more.

He’d been a father to Wally because Wally had had a wonderful mother to raise him. Will didn’t exactly have the best foundations from his own childhood to go on, in regards to raising a human being from infancy. And as much as he knew about Hannibal’s past, that wasn’t exactly promising either.

Truthfully, he was scared shitless.

But once in a while, despite the fear, something would happen that Will would consider truly miraculous, and lose himself to excitement, instead.

“Hannibal!” Will’s voice echoed around the bathroom. “I’m not dying, don’t panic, but you should really come down here right now.”

Despite Will’s reassurance, Hannibal’s footsteps were heavy. Any time Will could hear him move, he was concerned. Otherwise, he slipped silently through the house as if he glided rather than stepped. It was pretty eerie, honestly.

“Not dying,” Will reminded him when he stopped in the doorway, dish towel still in hand. Hannibal’s frown was entirely unintimidating.

Will shifted. Even in their deep, luxurious tub, if he laid correctly, he could watch his belly rise from the water like an island. He did so now, arms draped over the edge of the tub to support himself. “Here. Feel.”

Hannibal knelt beside the tub, reaching out to drape his palm over Will’s belly. Will closed his eyes, preferring sensation to sight. His body looked alien to him now, his belly button inverted, skin warping and stretching over things that it was never meant to hold. Sometimes, he could see limbs as his child stretched, as it did now.

Hannibal drew in a breath. He had to have been aware, of course, that Will had hit certain stages, but Will could not recall ever inviting him to this exact event.

The baby rolled, turned, nudged. A thump hit the place where Hannibal’s palm rested, then another, as though offended to be ‘watched’ in such a way.

“They’re getting more active lately,” Will explained. “I think they know they’re running out of room.”

For a while, Hannibal was quiet. He couldn’t summon the words. He had felt babies kick before, when workmates were letting everyone touch, or wives of colleagues complaining about the sensation, or women in the ER, worried they were going into labor when their baby was just feeling particularly rowdy.

But to feel it with Will, through his skin - the skin he’d marked and scarred, the skin he’d worshipped with his mouth and breath in bed - was so overwhelming that for a second Hannibal couldn’t even draw breath.

It was alive, their child, the child Will was carrying, that Hannibal had fathered, in the most roundabout way, was alive and reaching out and *touching* -

“Hey,” Will laughed quietly, his expression was fond when Hannibal’s eyes snapped to him, broken of his reverie. “Earth to Lecter.”

“I’m sorry,”

“Don’t be,” Will told him, setting a hand atop Hannibal’s. “It feels really, really weird. Even for me, still, and they’ve been doing that for weeks now.”

“Weeks?”

“Yeah,” Will shrugged. “Never constantly, just a shove or two. When I’m worried or can’t sleep or haven’t kept food down for a bit.” Will gave Hannibal an amused look. “ *Definitely* your child.”

Hannibal would have liked to have felt them. It pained him that Will did not immediately bring it to his attention. But then, he supposed there were some things he would simply have to accept, given the path he took to bring them here.

Beneath his palm, the baby shifted again. Hannibal could not make himself move. Will eyed him, his expression fond.

“They like when you talk to them,” he offered. “Although I don’t think they cared for Dante, they slept through it every time you read it.”

The baby had moved in response to Hannibal’s voice. For once, he was struck speechless.

It was good to talk to babies in utero. It had been mentioned by all the books. But until now, Hannibal had followed the books mechanically, step by step. Until now, their child had been abstract.

Soon, he would hold the babe himself. He would cut Will open one final time to bring their child into the world, to start a life in which neither would strike at the other again. They would work in tandem. They would be a family.

The last time Hannibal had had a family, he’d been very young indeed.

“You should say something,” Will suggested, his brow furrowed in concern. “I was kidding about the Dante. I don’t think they understand enough to hate anything just yet.”

Hannibal’s breath came out as a sigh and he stroked Will’s stomach a little before clearing his throat. “Dante’s not everyone’s cup of tea,” he agreed. The little thing inside Will moved around as though in agreement and Hannibal was struck speechless again. He looked back at Will only when wet fingers caught his chin and guided him closer for a kiss.

“You’re smitten.”

“I’m afraid I am.”

Will grinned at him. “Want to join me?”

The offer was tempting, and Hannibal allowed himself only a moment of hesitation before nodding. He kissed Will’s temple and left the bathroom to finish up whatever he was doing, or to lock the door, or to call Artie inside. Whatever it was, he wasn’t long, and when he returned he had a plate of finger food with him.

Because of course he did.

Will watched him undress, watched him fold his damn clothes, and moved just enough for Hannibal to have room to get into the tub behind him and sit down, letting Will lean against him. Hannibal’s hands immediately went to his stomach again and Will turned his cheek against Hannibal’s shoulder.

“We need to start buying supplies,” he said softly. “Bassinet, diapers, formula. Clothes. Jesus, what else do babies need?”

“Everything,” Hannibal admitted, and Will snorted.

“They need names, too.” He added after a while. “We haven’t talked about that yet.”

“Hannibal.” Hannibal said. There was a lack of hesitance that said he’d been decided for a while, but a wariness to his tone that suggested he knew exactly what Will’s response would be.

Will’s response, of course, was a snort of surprised laughter. “You’re kidding, right?”

“I’m the eighth of my name,” Hannibal said, sounding slightly stuck up in a way Will hadn’t heard since Baltimore.

“No.”

“It’s a family tradition.”

“No, we are *not* naming some poor kid Hannibal Lecter The Ninth.”

“Every firstborn son since the first Count Lecter-“

“Pretty sure you lost your claim to the title after you were convicted of serial murder,” Will pointed out. “Which, by the way, is another point in favor of *not* inflicting your name on Junior. Unless you want to name the next one Ted Bundy.”

Hannibal hummed, displeased, but Will could feel his smile when he kissed Will’s cheek. Even if Hannibal hadn’t killed a whole tonne of people *and* tried to frame Will for it, Will wouldn’t be comfortable with their child taking either of their names. He didn’t say anything for a while. He hadn’t settled on any names either; they either all held associations he didn’t want the child to carry, or they just didn’t feel right.

He also had a feeling that he was having a little girl.

“Theodore’s not a bad name,” Hannibal mumbled after a while, and Will couldn’t help it, he laughed, helpless giggles that he pressed against his hand as Hannibal stroked his hair and kissed his skin. “Perhaps Thea for a girl.”

“Maybe,” Will agreed after a moment, catching his breath. “Yeah, maybe.”

They rested together quietly for a time, and then Hannibal reached out to take something up from the plate he’d brought, offering it to Will. He’d tried to feed Will by hand before, and had found either a scoff or a bite as a reaction. This time, Will parted his lips and took it gently, with a soft hum of thanks.

Persimmon. Sweet and just a little exotic for Will’s usual tastes. He liked it. With a sigh he let the water and Hannibal take his weight and closed his eyes. He opened his mouth when Hannibal pressed something cool against it again and let the grape’s skin snap between his teeth before chewing.

“You get off on this, don’t you?” He mumbled after a while, no rancor in his tone. “Taking care of me. You really like doing it.”

“I do.”

Hannibal should have had children before. Will was struck by the bizarreness of that thought, and yet it was clearly true. Hannibal enjoyed having someone to coddle, to care for, and while Will enjoyed being the recipient of his attention, his dependency was almost up.

He really hadn't indulged Hannibal in this pregnancy as much as he perhaps should have. Will knew his anger had been justified, and that really, he should have fled the moment he found out he was pregnant. But he had stayed, and if he was going to see this out, he had to acknowledge Hannibal's place in the matter.

Will opened his mouth for another bite of fruit, cool and juicy against his tongue. It was hardly a hardship to sit through some pampering. "You're going to miss this, aren't you?"

Hannibal's hand cupped the swell of Will's stomach, and he kissed his temple. "I'll be glad to have you comfortable again," he said slowly. "But yes, I'll miss it." A moment's pause, and then, "we could always-"

"Don't ruin the moment," Will pleaded. "We aren't having any more kids."

Hannibal didn't argue with that, just offered Will another piece of fruit and eased his hands over Will's lax form in the water. He would miss seeing Will's body change to accommodate something magical. He would miss seeing Will relax with a book and their dog with his hands absently rubbing over his belly when he didn't think Hannibal was watching. He'd miss that.

But he would also have *Will* again. The man who had caught and held his attention, the man who saw him, truly, and accepted him with all his scars and viscera. He would have that man and his passion, his strong hands, his demanding body. He would have Will driven to ecstasy in bed, with his fingers, his mouth, his cock. He would have him and be had by him, forever.

He was certain there would still be times that Will would allow himself to be coddled, rare as they would be. Their rarity would make them all the more special.

The kicking increased in the next week to a point where Will was starting to get concerned. Hannibal would always feel for the shift, listen with his stethoscope. The two of them were waiting with bated breath to see *when* this final step of the journey would begin, and neither were sure how they'd know.

In the end, Will made the call himself, as much emotionally as logically.

"I've had the child in me for nearly nine months, Hannibal, it wants out," he said, leaning his weight on the counter as Hannibal scrambled some eggs in a bowl without even looking at him. He was looking at Will. "You know my body can't accommodate for the kid to physically tell me to let it go, we need to go in on our own."

For a few moments they were quiet. Then Hannibal set the bowl aside and leaned in a little closer to Will.

"Are you sure?"

“As sure as I’ll ever be, if I’m honest.” Will admitted. “Might as well get everything set up for delivery. Figured we’d use the dining room table,” he laughed then, drawing a hand over his face and rubbing his eyes. “Fuck me that kid is going to have some seriously weird stories to tell their therapist later.”

“I’d thought to keep you more comfortable,” Hannibal said. He reached for Will, and Will let himself be drawn close and held. “The spare bedroom. It will be the nursery once the baby outgrows the bassinet, it doesn’t matter if we ruin the bed.

The baby. In just a few hours, they’d have a baby. Will would *still* be on bed rest, but with something to show for it, finally.

“I was wondering why you were procrastinating on that,” he said. “It isn’t like you. Alright. The spare bedroom.”

Now that he’d said it, his stomach twisted up in a bundle of nerves. Will looked at the bowl of eggs, thick and slimy and suddenly nauseating. “Now. Let’s do it now. Unless you’re hungry.”

Hannibal glanced toward the bowl as if he had no idea how it had gotten there. “I seem to have lost my appetite. I have… there are things I’ve needed to prepare. Medicines. You shouldn’t eat if I’m going to put you under.”

“No,” Will said immediately. “I want to see it.”

“Will -”

“I want,” Will repeated. “To see it. Put me under after, when you take the uterus out. And you *will take it out, Hannibal.”* Hannibal hummed agreement, ducking his head in a nod when Will continued to burn a hole in him with his eyes. After a while Will swallowed. “I want to see… to see what we made. I want to make sure it’s okay before I - want to see that I haven’t fucked it up.”

“Will,” Hannibal’s hand was gentle against Will’s face and he suddenly wanted to cry. There would absolutely be tears later.

“Come on just… let’s get it done. What else do you need to get ready? Can I help?”

“No,” Hannibal assured him. “Go lay down. I’ll bring everything in.”

He would need boiling water. Clean towels. He’d ordered medical equipment in small batches throughout Will’s pregnancy to avoid suspicion, and had it sent to their home as well as various P.O. boxes around the city. Everything was still packaged, sterilized. He had saline, a stand for the drip, various paraphernalia for intravenous feeding as well as delivery of medication.

He had a defibrillator, should it come to that.

The only thing he didn’t have was blood. Blood was difficult to keep and much easier to trace than miscellaneous medical equipment. In the absolute worst case, he would deliver Will to

the hospital claiming he saw him attacked. But before that, he would use his own blood if necessary.

He hadn't been particularly honest with Will about their incompatibility. But… his white lies had been for the greater good, in the end. They would have the baby, their family, their fresh start.

Forgiveness tasted like copper, Hannibal knew well. Forgiveness was black in the moonlight. A bassinet on Will's side of the bed, a girl they never spoke about, memories buried deep so that a new foundation could be built above them.

Forgiveness and terror shared similar gripping claws. Hannibal gathered his things in stages, Will watching as he went in and out over and over, piling everything within reach, shifting nightstands and dragging over the changing table in case he needed another surface.

Will was bare and beautiful on green silk sheets, comforter shoved down against the footboard. Hannibal had drawn him on sheets like this, looking far less pale and drawn.

"I won't hurt you," Hannibal promised, though he already had. "I have a drip, here. You can watch, but you won't feel it."

A shudder of relief ran through Will. He'd been willing to bear the pain of Hannibal slicing him open, just to see the results of their efforts. Hannibal felt an immeasurable fondness for him.

If Will died, Hannibal was not sure what he would do. The baby, small and defenseless, of course came first, but once the baby was safe…

It was a possibility Hannibal would not allow himself to think about. He drew Will's hand up and pressed a kiss to the backs of his knuckles. "Are you ready?"

Will shook his head. "Not at all," he laughed and forced himself to lie back. He didn't look as Hannibal inserted a catheter. He didn't look when Hannibal sterilized his stomach with a soft cloth, alcohol evaporating from his skin as quickly as it had touched it.

"The procedure shouldn't take longer than an hour," Hannibal was saying as he worked, making sure that everything was within reach, so that once he started he didn't need to step further back than one pace to get to what he needed. "After the delivery, I will put you under, and remove the uterus and make sure everything is in order before stitching you up."

"Alright."

"Will," Will glanced over, offering his hand when Hannibal reached for it to find a vein. "I love you."

Will swallowed. "I know."

He didn't think about the statistics of c-section deliveries and survival rates. He didn't think about how far they were from a hospital and just how many very important blood vessels

were in his stomach. He didn't think about how this could be the moment he died, finally, the one time Hannibal cut into him not to hurt but to heal.

He couldn't.

Because if he did he would lose his mind, and Hannibal would lose him.

And he couldn't have that.

Not again. Not ever again.

Hannibal checked the drip, gently taped the line down against Will's arm, and squeezed his shoulder before slipping his mask on and putting on a pair of gloves. Then he took up a scalpel.

Will had read - while deep in the bowels of postpartum internet - that women forgot the pain of childbirth, that when asked, they couldn't say just how much it had hurt or where, because it didn't matter. When Hannibal made the first incision, drawing a red line across Will's skin, Will felt *nothing* .

Nothing, when Hannibal opened him up properly and revealed a bloody mess that Will could barely make sense of. And nothing, again, when Hannibal made his next incision. There was nothing but an eerie lack of sensation that made Will feel as though he was already dead.

Birth was messy. Will had known that without needing to read a single book, but he had been completely unprepared for the wet and bloody mess that soaked Hannibal's gloves. He understood now why hospitals hid the view with a curtain, but he couldn't look away.

No pain, none at all, but when Hannibal put hands inside his body and pulled out a pale and soaked little thing, Will's chest gave an agonizing lurch.

The baby had seemed so huge inside of him, but what Hannibal was holding could not have been more than seven pounds, tiny and fragile. And quiet, so very quiet.

"Hannibal," Will gasped. " *Hannibal!"*

Hannibal turned, laying the baby out on a towel, his body blocking Will's view. Will made a sound, entirely inhuman, unrecognizable as his own voice. He couldn't see. He had no way to *know.*

Hannibal did *something* with a small bulb that Will could only guess at, and then the baby gave a wet, high cry.

"She's alright, Will," Hannibal said softly. "She's perfect."

"She," Will barely managed the word. He couldn't believe it. He couldn't quite put together that the little thing hiccuping and crying clear as a bell had come from *him* , that he had carried her and gave her life. "Let… let me see."

Hannibal wrapped the tiny thing up loosely and brought her close so Will could look. He didn't see much. His vision blurred with tears and Will reached out to draw a trembling hand over the baby's head.

"Holy shit," he said, and fainted.

When Will woke, he was groggy and sore. He was still in the spare room but the curtains were drawn. He was on his back, with a blanket over him, and something else. Something -

The baby - the little girl, *their* little girl - was still resting on his chest, though cleaned up now, and dozing. And next to Will, wide hand on the baby's back, was Hannibal, watching both her and Will like a sentinel.

"Hannibal,"

The man immediately turned to him, hands over Will's hair, over his cheeks, pressing their foreheads together. Will made a sound and smiled, but couldn't manage more than that. He felt like he was made of lead. When Hannibal kissed him, Will sighed and let him.

"There were no complications," Hannibal whispered against him. "Once she was born you… you lost consciousness and I removed the uterus. No organ damage. No major bloodloss. Will, you're extraordinary. You are absolutely remarkable."

Will tried to laugh. "How long was I out?"

"You've both been asleep for four hours, going on the fifth."

"And she's been -"

"On you the whole time," Hannibal promised. "Once I checked her over, washed her, she's been sleeping on you."

Will nuzzled him and forced his eyes to open, wincing as he tried to sit up to look at the baby - their baby - properly. Right. His stomach had been cut open again. Hannibal hurried to push more pillows up behind Will's head enough for him to see properly.

Will ghosted his fingers over the top of the baby's head. She had hair, a dusting of brown strands that felt like silk when Will touched them. She was so *small* . So unbelievably small. So fragile, delicate, special. Will knew that she most likely looked like a steamed potato to anyone but the two of them, and it made sense now why mothers cooed over their newborns as though they were truly beautiful things.

"Hi baby girl," Will sighed, smiling gratefully at Hannibal when he helped move the little thing further up Will's chest so she was tucked against his sternum. "Hello sweetheart. You're about as big as Artie aren't you?"

Hannibal hummed thoughtfully. "Artemis was the virgin goddess of childbirth," he said. Will snorted.

“I’d say it sounded like a bad combination, but given the situation…” He paused, glancing at Hannibal suspiciously. “Hannibal. We can’t name our daughter after the dog.”

“Of course not,” Hannibal agreed. “But Artemis’s Roman counterpart…”

Will thought over his limited knowledge of mythology, frowning. “...Diana?” He finally said hesitantly. When Hannibal nodded, he looked down at the tiny baby on his chest. “Diana,” he repeated, working the name over for a moment. “I like it.”

“It’s a good name,” Hannibal said. “Classic.”

Will rolled his eyes, smiling fondly at his small family. “Her name is a terrible dad joke,” he complained. “Wait until she gets old enough to understand your puns.”

“And yours,” Hannibal counterd, amused, and Will swallowed.

She was here now. Diana. A little miracle child born in the most heinous of circumstances, to two monsters who would love her fiercely. He supposed it could be worse.

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

With the return of some of their energy came the return of other things that had been neglected. Diana wasn't yet ready to sleep through the night, but she made it longer and longer periods between feedings, which left just a tiny bit more time for her parents to spend together.

It was Will who made the first move. Hannibal no doubt would have waited another nine months if he had his way, wanting to be certain Will was healed.

Chapter Notes

THANK YOU FOR HANGING OUT THROUGHOUT THIS ENTIRE ROLLERCOASTER RIDE WITH US!!

Will healed slowly but steadily. Hannibal took most of the late night feedings, allowing Will to rest and recover. During the day, Will and Diana were largely content to snuggle each other. She often stared up at him with her wide blue eyes, drinking him in.

"She remembers the sound of your voice," Hannibal told him.

"And yours."

As the days wore on, though, and Will's strength grew, one thing became very clear:

Hannibal knew absolutely nothing about babies.

He'd figured out formula thanks to the directions on the can, he was more than happy to talk to her, and he knew to support her head, but that seemed to be about it. He held her awkwardly, stiffly, and could never seem to figure out her cries even as Will learned them all. And Diana's diapers only leaked if Hannibal had been the one to put her in them.

It was oddly endearing.

Will wasn't even sure why he himself wasn't doing as poorly - it wasn't as though he had younger siblings to look after, or like Wally had been the age that needed diaper changes. Will joked once, gently burping Diana over his shoulder, that perhaps he and Hannibal had a different approach to mess.

“You had a full body plastic suit,” Will reminded him, feet up on the ottoman, Artie in his lap and Diana tucked up under his chin.

“It was to prevent unwanted evidence being left behind,” Hannibal replied, almost haughty. “Fibers, skin cells, hair.”

“Oh, I’m aware,” Will nodded sagely. “I was forced to head the team hunting you for a while, remember?”

The look Hannibal gave him was priceless.

Yet even fumbling as they were, they were slowly building a rhythm around being a family. Will was on strict bedrest, and after Hannibal absolutely forbade him to bend or lift anything heavier than Artie and his coffee mug. Will was grateful, but also smug about it. He got quite a kick out of making Hannibal bring him things, waiting to see how long it would take the man to catch onto the game.

Will didn’t remember any lullabies, so sang AC/DC and Aerosmith to Diana as she dozed on him. Hannibal had never heard anyone quite so tuneless, and yet never interrupted. And Diana would stare up at Will and grab at his fingers when he pretended to air-guitar as he sang both the lyrics and the musical accompaniment.

Hannibal was determined for the baby to be bilingual, though he could not seem to decide which language her second should be.

“She doesn’t even have a *first* language yet,” Will reminded him during yet another Italian sonnet. They had so far proven the best at getting Diana to sleep, much to Hannibal’s smug satisfaction. “And she’ll have English at home and French at school. We can’t all be polyglots…”

Will trailed off, staring at the sleeping baby. “We’re going to have to start going out a lot more as she gets bigger. After school activities, sleepovers. We can’t keep her locked up in the house. People will see our faces.”

“People see what they want to see,” Hannibal said. He tucked Diana into her bassinet, close enough for Will to check on her without leaving the bed. “No one will be looking for us here, not five years from now, and we will have changed.”

Will frowned, reaching out to snag Hannibal by the wrist. “I love our daughter,” he said firmly, “but if we get arrested at baby gymnastics because *you* had to play God, I will swear up and down to Jack Crawford that you kidnapped me. I will *help him* get a conviction.”

Hannibal kissed him. “I know.”

Hannibal’s diapering skills got better, and while Will still found it exceptionally funny that he’d been better at it to begin with, one thing Hannibal was a master at was getting Diana to sleep when she was fussing.

It was like magic. Hannibal would pick her up, murmuring to her in one language or another, Will figured it was Lithuanian, and bring her close. Sometimes it was enough that his forehead was against hers and she felt safe and held, other times it took more than that, but whatever was needed Hannibal seemed to be the one to provide it.

Will found he wasn't jealous, though he knew he grew irritable when she wouldn't go down for *him* , he was more curious. Hannibal Lecter, the Chesapeake Ripper, was walking through their twilit house gently bouncing their baby girl until her screaming became whimpering became questioning little hiccups, as though she herself wasn't sure anymore why she'd started crying in the first place.

Will wondered which of them would be the one she went to for 'the talk', which of them she'd reach for when she woke from a nightmare. He knew that beyond carrying her to term, bringing her to life, he had no genetic input into their daughter whatsoever, and yet Will *still* worried that his madness would imprint on her and ruin her.

He tried not to think about it.

When he was finally allowed out of bed, Will made jokes about learning to walk. In truth, he felt off balance without the extra weight he'd adjusted to carrying. He went through a brief period where any distance between himself and Diana was far too much. If she was out of his sight, he searched for her, never satisfied until he could pull her to him.

Hannibal, lacking the self-preservation instincts of most normal humans, had an interesting proposal for the solution.

"We could always have another baby. You're young yet."

Will blinked at him, face slack. He could not even muster shock, because he wasn't shocked. Nor could he twist his face into anything resembling disgust.

Instead, he plucked Diana from Hannibal's arms and turned on his heel, marching off down the hall.

"Will. Will, it was only a joke."

It had not been a joke, and they both knew it, but Hannibal's baby fever would have to content itself with Diana. Will had never planned to have children, to begin with, let alone multiples. And Diana was enough of a handful for the two of them.

Colic was the worst.

Hannibal, exhausted and drawn as Will was by the second week of it, had to admit with grudging amusement that at least in this, she was meeting baby milestones. It was the first time Hannibal, not Will, broke down in tears, too, when he wasn't able to settle her as he had so often before this. Will watched, genuinely awestruck, as he had never once seen Hannibal weep before.

It was a curious thing to see Hannibal feel such empathy for another living being. Will honestly wasn't sure what to do.

In the end, he'd tugged his partner close, hushing him as though he were hushing Diana, or Artie, and lay back on the sofa to let Hannibal cry.

Within three weeks, the colic was over, Diana wasn't crying so much, and the two of them could get a little more rest again. They didn't bring up the other crying incident, but it had broken through some of the remaining crumbled wall between them and whatever tension had hung between them like a haze was gone.

When Diana turned two months, Will took up jogging, bringing Artie along with him. The two would return panting and pleased, and sprawl on the kitchen floor until Hannibal - exasperated - shooed them out.

With the return of some of their energy came the return of other things that had been neglected. Diana wasn't yet ready to sleep through the night, but she made it longer and longer periods between feedings, which left just a tiny bit more time for her parents to spend together.

It was Will who made the first move. Hannibal no doubt would have waited another nine months if he had his way, wanting to be certain Will was healed.

The scar across his belly was still pink, but Will felt better than he had in months. He was tired of waiting. With Diana down for a nap in the bedroom, he accosted Hannibal in the study, settling on Hannibal's desk and no doubt interrupting something very important.

Or more sketches of himself and Diana as Mary and Jesus, which, frankly, there could be less of.

"She went down for you?" Hannibal asked.

"Baby loves her Aerosmith," Will said. He crossed his legs at the knee, leaning back slightly so his shirt rode up. He didn't feel particularly sexy, given the stretch marks and the scars, but he was hoping he could make up for that with effort and enthusiasm. "You weren't busy, were you?"

Hannibal considered the man before him, the way he sat, the pleasurable tension in him. He considered the sliver of skin Will presented to him, the tilt of his head, the frankly scandalous way he let the tip of his tongue wet the center of his bottom lip before disappearing again.

"Quite the opposite," he said, setting his pen down next to Will and leveling him with a look. He'd certainly wanted to pull Will to him, often, more often than he would care to admit. He'd certainly wanted to press their lips together, and yank Will close by the hips, and tug his hair and suck bruises into his skin and -

Will uncrossed his legs and set his socked feet on Hannibal's knees, adding just enough pressure to encourage Hannibal to move the chair closer, his palms moving to slide up Will's

thighs as he did. When Will leaned in, it was to set his fingers beneath Hannibal's chin, his tongue tracing the seam of his lips to part them again.

"You're about to be."

"Oh?" Hannibal's eyes were hooded, his voice low and rough already. So long he'd ached for Will. Longer, he was certain, than Will had ached for him. And even with the Dragon's death, even with Will's determination to stay with him, even their intimacy throughout this strange and wonderful pregnancy, he had doubted.

Not anymore.

Will leaned back again, but only just enough to yank his shirt over his head, a lackadaisical and entirely thoughtless motion that made it all the hotter. Then he moved his feet from where he'd had Hannibal pinned, and slid to straddle him instead.

"Oh," he agreed, grinning, before grabbing the back of Hannibal's head and tugging him forward to kiss.

Hannibal's hands slid up the planes of Will's back, creating shivers everywhere they touched. Will felt oversensitized; it had been too long since they'd touched like this, too long since they'd had enough time and energy for more than a quick peck goodnight.

"I'm not delicate anymore," Will murmured against Hannibal's lips. He ground his hips down against Hannibal's to prove his point. "No more excuses. You're going to fuck me."

Hannibal made a sound almost like a growl. He shoved Will backwards, laying him out on the desk. Will grinned up at him through hooded eyes, spreading his thighs wider.

"You missed a step, in all this," he told Hannibal. "It's not like you to leave a task unfinished."

"I'll catch up," Hannibal promised him. He trailed a line of kisses down Will's throat, biting at his collarbone while his hands fumbled with Will's slacks.

"Mmm, that might take you a while. You owe me nine months worth."

The challenge sent a thrum of heat through Hannibal and his next kiss was a sharp nip to Will's skin that made the man laugh. He hadn't wanted their first time - their true first time - to be over his desk, but returning to the bedroom was impossible with Diana sleeping there. He considered quickly: the living room was the obvious choice, but far too far away with how desperately desirous Will was beneath him, the floor was crude but also possibly better than the desk with its scattered papers.

There was the chair Hannibal had just risen from, and the high wing-back chairs he had near the bookcases.

He yanked Will's pants down around his knees and ducked his head to worship kisses over his scarred belly. He knew Will had very little feeling there over the scar tissue, but it was more symbolic than anything else.

I'll never hurt you again.

I'll never break you again.

I'll spend all my life keeping you soft and safe and warm.

A hand landed in his hair and shoved Hannibal lower. Will groaned when familiar lips teased the base of his cock, parted to take the head between them into the most blissful enveloping heat.

"God, Hannibal, yes," Will moaned, shifting around until Hannibal tugged his pants all the way off and he could wrap his legs over his shoulders. "Just wait - wait til I get *my* mouth on you…"

Hannibal teased the tip of his tongue around the head of Will's cock, working the sweetest sounds from him. The thought of Will's mouth made Hannibal ache, but right now, he could not have been pulled away. Will's thighs gripped at him, his heels digging into Hannibal's shoulder blades.

Hannibal could have stayed like this for days, bringing Will to the height of pleasure over and over again, but Will was less patient. After a few minutes, he tugged urgently at Hannibal's hair.

"Up. Up, I don't know how long she'll sleep and I need you inside me."

Really, there was no way for Hannibal to argue with that.

Will had come prepared. He practically threw the bottle of lube at Hannibal, spreading his legs wide once more to welcome Hannibal's fingers between them.

It seemed the desk was where it would happen, then. But considering their entire relationship from its very beginning through its tumultuous path, it was fitting. Traditionally romantic wasn't their style.

Hannibal had fingered Will before, but never with the guarantee, the promise of being able to penetrate him after. Always, to ease Will's arousal throughout his pregnancy, always with the intent to stop, despite neither wanting to. And now… now.

"Fuck, oh fuck," Will hissed, dropping a hand down to hold his legs wide as his other tugged his own hair. Hannibal had two fingers in him, seeking expertly over his prostate and Will was so damn close. He wanted to come on Hannibal's cock. If he came beforehand, well… then he'd see how his body reacted to two orgasms in a row. He'd set his mind on this, decided, and hell or high water he would go through with it.

Hannibal ducked his head to suck one of Will's nipples into his mouth as he added a third finger, relishing the way Will squirmed beneath him, the way he smelled of clean sweat and desperate need. His own body was in hyperfocus, concentrating on everything and anything Will's did; every twitch and shudder, every tensing of muscles.

"Hannibal - now, I don't fucking care how just - *now.* "

Hannibal spread his fingers as he slipped them free, and ducked his head to suck a bruise in the hollow of one trembling thigh before working his pants and underwear free and fisting his own cock quickly.

Before him lay a man with bared teeth and bright scars, a man who had bitten as hard as Hannibal had and left marks of his own, a man who hadn't died, who hadn't burned, who hadn't drowned. A man who had given life and taken it.

"Remarkable," Hannibal told him, grasping Will's hips to bring him just over the edge of the desk as he lined up and started to push into him.

Will tossed his head back on a groan. His teeth sank into his lower lip, one hand tugging at his own hair. It was a lot, somehow. It shouldn't have been, after all the ways Hannibal had been inside of him, and yet it was.

Hannibal bent over him, braced against the desk, his hair falling into his eyes as he caught his breath.

"Don't." Will pulled his knees up, hooking a leg around Hannibal's hip.

"Don't what?" Hannibal pulled back to look at him. Will's face was red, his lips swollen. Hannibal wanted to paint him just like this.

"Don't be gentle with me," Will said softly. "We've never been gentle with each other before."

"Sometimes," Hannibal said, brushing hair from Will's eyes, "you deserve more gentleness than you allow yourself."

Will snorted, but his brows furrowed, helplessly charmed. "I knew you'd be a fucking sap during sex," he said, arching his back when Hannibal slowly pulled out of him before thrusting back in, settling somehow *deeper* even than the first time. Will shuddered when Hannibal kissed hot and lazy against his pulse. He dropped an arm to drape over Hannibal's shoulder and slid his fingers into his hair.

It hurt. But not as much as other things they'd done. It was the kind of hurt Will knew he would get addicted to, the kind of hurt he knew he'd crave, the kind of hurt he didn't feel bad about Hannibal enjoying with him.

And he knew it would turn to pleasure, if Hannibal's tongue and clever fingers were anything to go by. Will hummed, low and pleased, when Hannibal started a slow, deliberate rhythm, and adjusted himself incrementally to get him just where he wanted him.

He didn't need Hannibal to go faster. He didn't want him to. The intimacy in this was exactly what Will had been craving for the months they hadn't been able to have this. A manifestation of an aching need, a consummation of an entire lifetime.

He draped his other arm over Hannibal's back too and grasped his shirt between his fingers.

“God you feel so good,” Will whispered, turning his head against Hannibal’s in a nuzzle as the other laughed softly and angled himself a little higher, enough to just brush Will’s prostate, just tease against it. “Hannibal,”

“I have you.”

They rocked together, slow, steady motions that had Will tingling down to his toes. Hannibal wrapped a hand under one of Will’s knees, pushing it up and out to give himself a better angle.

This time when he grazed Will’s prostate, Will moaned, nails digging into Hannibal’s skin. He could not seem to bring their bodies close enough. Hannibal was *inside* him, and still Will felt like there was too much space.

Hannibal obeyed Will’s wordless demands, leaning forward until their chests brushed with every thrust. Will was burning hot around him, clenching every time Hannibal found the right angle.

“I love you,” Will gasped. “I love you, you insane fucking- don’t stop, don’t you dare stop.”

“I won’t,” Hannibal whispered, nearly breathless with the strain of holding back. “I won’t, Will. I love you.”

Will whimpered, helpless and needy and *close* . He knew that this was far from the roughest they would be or could be, he knew, and still he rode the knife's edge of arousal with gasps and moans and demands for more.

He'd find Hannibal again when Diana was down after her next bottle. He'd catch him in a more opportune place to be fucked. Hell, now that he knew how this felt, he'd straddle the man in the goddamn kitchen and fuck *himself* .

Hannibal seemed to read his mind, grasping Will's hair and tugging it, arching him back so he could suck bruises to Will's throat and jaw.

"I'll have you in every room of this house," he promised roughly. "Against every wall. The neighbors will complain about the noise, bang down the door, and I'll pull your voice even louder still to silence them."

"Fuck, oh fuck -" Will's breath hitched and he bent his knees more, spread himself like an offering, the images Hannibal conjured playing behind his eyes in beautiful technicolor.

"Beautiful man, I'll have you limping,"

"Please," Will groaned, dropping a hand between them to stroke his cock. "Please, all of it, everything,"

“Everything and anything,” Hannibal growled. His teeth found Will’s pulse, nipping and tugging until Will’s throat was a mess of red and purple. “The things I’ve wanted to do to you, Will. I want to fit myself inside you until you think you can’t fit anymore, and then I want to take you just a bit further. I want to make you *scream* .”

The words were enough, the fantasies were enough. Will tightened his grip and came between them, hot and slick, voice cracking on a moan. Hannibal fucked him over that point and then some, sealing his lips over Will's when Will's cries threatened to fill the entire house.

Hannibal found his own release in the sharp bite of Will's teeth against his lips, the scratch of Will's nails down his back. He sated himself in Will, drank him up until he couldn't move. Then, he finally allowed himself to rest, covering Will's body with his own and smearing Will's mess between them as he caught his breath.

"Fuck," Will murmured. " *Fuck* ."

"That's the colloquial term, yes."

Will swatted him lightly. "Don't be an ass when I'm feeling affectionate towards you."

Hannibal kissed him, spreading a hand over Will's chest, over his hammering heart. Then he pulled free, catching Will's wince with a nuzzle against his cheek, another kiss pressed there after

"You've a habit of exceeding expectations but that was something else," Will told him, holding Hannibal close, letting his legs hang loose over the edge of the desk. His back would be killing him if he lay like that much longer but he just couldn't get himself to move.

"Likewise," Hannibal replied, brushing a curl behind Will's ear with a smile.

"Not disappointed after all that wait?" Will quipped, grinning when Hannibal's eyes narrowed in gentle irritation. "I think once we're in bed it'll be a whole other ballgame."

"Oh?"

"Gonna drive you mad for a change."

"I don't doubt it."

Will laughed, pressing a hand to his face before letting it drop to the desk beyond him. He felt damn near breathless with adoration for this man, this monster, this thing that had overwhelmed him and claimed him and allowed Will to see him as none ever could.

"I love you." Will told him earnestly.

Hannibal looked at Will, his brow furrowed and his eyes soft. He cupped Will's cheek and pressed their foreheads together.

"I love you," he said softly. "Everything I do, I do for love of you."

"I know," Will said quietly. "It's the only reason I haven't killed you."

Before Hannibal could come up with some sort of pretentious retort, Will pulled him down into a kiss, soft and sweet, lingering just a shade too long.

And then came the cry, loud and piercing, the distraught wail of an infant who has woken all alone and doesn't know why. Will pulled back with a wry smile.

"She loves you, too," he said, "and I'll love you even more if you get her while I get cleaned up.

"Anything and everything," Hannibal said, with one last lingering kiss to Will's temple.

End Notes

Please note that neither of us are doctors or know anything about this level of medical science. It's a fic, so there will be inconsistencies and inaccuracies... suspend disbelief with us for a bit ;)

FIND US ON TWITTER | TUMBLR | PILLOWFORT

Works inspired by this one

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!